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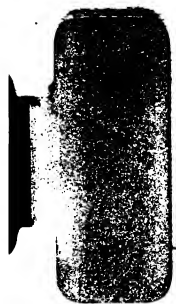
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MARY, QUEEN OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

AMONG THE BLESSED

DEVOTING THOUGHTS ABOUT FAVOURITE
SAINTS

BY THE

REV. MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

AUTHOR OF "AT HOME WITH GOD," ETC.

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

HONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

19 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK, BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA

1911



Joseph Wright, 1790.

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, ON THE SCAFFOLD

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PREFACE.

I BELIEVE in the Communion of Saints. I believe that all who belong to the true Church, as the Catechism teaches, by their prayers and good works assist each other. I believe in the Communion of Saints, which, as Pope Leo XIII has told us, is "the mutual communication of help, expiation, prayers, and blessings, among all the faithful who, whether they have already attained to the heavenly country, or are detained in the purgatorial fire, or are still exiles here on earth, all enjoy the common franchise of that city of which Christ is the head, and of which the constitution is charity." I believe that the beatitude of heaven is not torpor, or apathy, or insensibility, but true life, vivid consciousness, intense activity, thinking, loving, doing.

Our Divine Redeemer represents even the miserable Dives as tenderly concerned for his brothers: much more must the Blessed Souls be concerned for their friends left behind on earth. The bright young Carmelite of Lisieux in Normandy, who is known to many as the Little Flower of Jesus,¹ said towards the end of her brief and beautiful life, "I wish to spend my Heaven in doing good upon earth". And surely part of the heaven of the Blessed must consist in being made the instruments of God's bounty towards their poor fellow-creatures who are still carrying on an uncertain warfare down here below. And therefore also it behoves us on our part to look up to the Saints, canonized and uncanonized, who

¹ Though she was born as late as 1873, and died as early as 1897, her beatification is already prayed for and desired by very many in various countries, especially in her own afflicted France.

Putnam #1.- March 9, 1915 (T).

are with God on high, to rejoice with them, to think of them, to praise them, to beg their aid, and to stimulate our sloth and cowardice by their bright example.

Two criticisms may be forestalled. "Favourite Saints"—but where is Saint Joseph? I have already given two books to himself alone: "St. Joseph's Anthology," a collection of all the poems in his praise, and "St. Joseph of Jesus and Mary," essays and meditations on his life, character, and privileges. Secondly, most of the poems quoted in the present volume are original to this extent that they have either been written by me or given to me by friends for publication in *The Irish Monthly* which I have edited for thirty-eight years.

Perhaps God may deign to use this book to wring from some heart that cry of St. Augustine in the supreme crisis of his life, *Numquid ego non potero quod isti et istae?* "Cannot I do what these have done, mere youths and maidens?" For another also of God's heroes, one of the seventeen saints commemorated in the following pages, the reading of saints' lives was among the most striking of the means that God made use of to tear him away from the world. In the poor measure of our small, selfish hearts, may we too, like Augustine and like Ignatius, draw profit from the example of the saints, that so "the King of angels may lead us safely through the perils of life to the company of the heavenly citizens on high". *Ad societatem civium supernorum perducatur nos Rex Angelorum.* May our eternal lot be *Among the Blessed!*

M. R.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S, DUBLIN,

Feast of St. Matthew, 21 September, 1911.

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AN EXHORTATION TO READ THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

My brothers and my sisters, I pray you, love the saints,
And read their story often. Whene'er your courage faints,
When earth too closely presses, and heaven seems far away,
The thought of these will help you to turn to God and pray.
You more than all, dear children, dear little girls and boys,
The world will blind you, stun you, with its glitter and its noise,
And things most vile and loathsome may fascinate your gaze,
Unless, dear children, heavenward your eyes and hearts you raise.
Then turn your eyes to heaven, and seek for trusty friends
Among the heavenly courtiers, whose kingdom never ends.
So was I taught by children scarce older than their brother—
Oh! God be blessed for giving such sisters, such a mother!
Had not my distant childhood been fenced so closely in,
From every subtle peril, from every sign of sin,—
Had not those pure affections filled all the youthful breast,
Had not my home afforded hope, happiness, and rest,
Had Agnes, Aloysius, not been familiar names,
And prayer and work been almost as cheerful as our games:
Less happily, less safely, earth's path I should have trod,
Nor should I now be praising the blessed saints of God.
Old homely Alban Butler, so learned and so clear,
(A little dry and heavy) lay always ready near.
We had not books as pretty as children now enjoy,
But do you read yours better? I doubt it much, dear boy.
Make friends, then, with the angels and blessed saints on high,
And shun whate'er befits not such holy company.
The youthful heart is guarded from all that chills and taints
By thinking oft of Heaven and of God's happy Saints.

M. R.

TO THE SAINTS.¹

Will you not tell me what it is to be
A saint, O Saints, whom I may never see :
For what is common unto you and me ?

Man's flesh was yours once, as it still is mine ;
But you lived loyal to the Law Divine.
I am not even the lowest of your line.

Pleasing yourselves to you was ever pain ;
Mortification, ecstasy and gain ;
Your joy, to make your dearest passions vain.

I have no part in such celestial things :
Vision I have, but not the actual wings
That lifted, sped you, to the heavenly springs,

Whence you drank daily draughts of living grace,
And, mirrored there, caught glances of God's Face
And glimpses of the glorious Holy Place.

You found your fullest freedom in restraint :
A weakling slave, my spirit, frail and faint :
Oh, rare is the strong secret of the Saint !

White were you, Saints ! oh, white and passing white !
And you the darkness of the sacred night
Led ever upward to the perfect Light.

To me the glory of the living day
Is gladness, mixed with moments of dismay :
I cannot, cannot, tread your sterner way.

White Saints, who never your white souls disgraced,
Nor, for the trial of God's love, effaced
Him from your vision, nor one hour displaced

¹ This fine poem was given to me by Lionel Johnson for publication in "The Irish Monthly". Though not of Irish birth, he was devoted to Ireland; and Ireland was "the country wed to woe" that he puts so high among his loves in the following lines.

Him from His sure enthronement in your hearts :
Teach me to play your painful happy parts ;
Teach me your perilous and perfect arts !

Give me your love of love and of desire :
Ah, for your beautiful consuming fire !
I linger on the lowlands : lift me higher !

Born into life, busy with life, as I,
Were you, white Saints, who were not loth to die :
I cling to life ; thinking on death, I sigh.

But whence, great Saints, this greatest difference,
That I to mine own self do violence
Of sin, but yours was of obedience ?

You could do all, through Christ your Strengtheners ;
Christ was of your own selves the Vanquisher :
Am I not also Christ's petitioner ?

Freedom and weakness in my will I know :
Ah, is it malice, conscious and aglow,
That into paths of death persuades me so ?

Not malice, loathliest of loathly things !
Oh, let it not be malice, that thus brings
My soul within the shadow of death's wings !

Said I, that I have knowledge of my will ?
False ! false ! Blind born, blind I continue still :
I do not know myself, only mine ill.

Here upon earth a many loves I know,—
Of friends, and of a country wed to woe ;
Of the high Muses ; of wild wind, pure snow ;

Of heartening sun, exhilarating sea :
And yet the lowest sinner well may be
Heir to a station towering over me.

Fear had you, holy fear : you often knew
Trembling ; remembering, chosen are but few :
Often upon your souls there fell no dew.

The desert, dry with dereliction, felt
Often your footsteps : came no fire to melt
The numbing ice wherein your spirits dwelt.

And yet, indomitably you endured ;
In deeps of darkness, yet of light assured ;
Invincible your trust, serene, secured.

Kyrie eleison lived upon your lips ;
Constant, your terror of the soul's eclipse,
And dooming of the dread Apocalypse.

Oh, could it be ? Oh, royal Love ! could I,
Far from yourselves, yet in your kingdom, vie
With you in endless chaunt to the Most High ?

Oh, could it be ? Is God so good as this,
That even I at last might reach your bliss,
And kiss the Son with no betraying kiss ?

ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL.

(JUNE 29.)

“AMIABLE and glorious in their life, even in death they were not divided. They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions” (2 Kings i. 23). King David, in the generosity of his royal heart, the moment Saul is dead forgets all that was blameworthy in the fallen king, all the injuries he had inflicted or had tried to inflict on David himself; and he joins his praises with those of his son Jonathan in this famous lamentation with which the second book of Kings opens. The words I have taken from it are a very appropriate text to suggest the union of St. Peter and St. Paul in the present festival, commemorating as this festival does their union in a glorious death.

The Church herself evidently had this passage of the Old Testament before her mind when she composed the antiphon, which on certain days she uses in the Divine Office at Vespers and Lauds as a joint commemoration of the two saints, whom she joins together also to-day. *Gloriosi principes terrae, quomodo in vita sua dilexerunt se, ita et in morte non sunt separati.* “Glorious princes of the earth, as in their life they loved one another, so also in death they were not divided.”

Divided they are not, but united closely in our prayers and in our hearts to-day. The memory indeed of each of them is linked with other days besides in the course of the ecclesiastical year. St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles, Christ's first Vicar, has naturally several feasts consecrated to his honour—St. Peter's Chair at Antioch, St. Peter's Chair at Rome, the feast of St. Peter's Chains. The conversion, too, of St. Paul—that second Saul, braver and more kingly by far than the father of Jonathan—the shock of Divine grace which transformed Saul the persecutor into Paul the Apostle was too splendid and momentous an event in the early history of the Christian Church not to be brought year by year before the minds of her children by a special festival of its own, which occurs on 25 January; and she devotes to-morrow also to the individual commemoration of St. Paul, as if to make amends to him for giving to St. Peter more than even his proper share of her liturgy to-day. No doubt some such reparation is needed; for to-day Epistle, Gospel, every responsory, the whole Mass and Office are full of St. Peter, whereas St. Paul is mentioned only in two hymns and in the Collect of the Mass, which is repeated at all the Hours of the Divine Office. But it is honour enough to be thus named in conjunction with St. Peter. It is honour enough that the 29th day of June is the feast, not of St. Peter alone, but of St. Peter and St. Paul united. Whom God therefore and His Church have thus joined together, let us not sunder even in our thoughts, but let us study the character of these two princes of the

Church side by side. We can do so under the two aspects which may be supposed to be symbolized by those other words of King David that we began with : " They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions ". Eagles in the majestic swiftness of their upward flight through the sublimest regions of supernatural truth, in the clearness and firmness of their faith which almost enabled them to fix their gaze on the unclouded brightness of God's majesty, as the eagle is said to gaze with unflinching eye at the noonday sun. And then lions—lions in the strength and vehemence of their love for God, in the very fury of their zeal for His honour, which urged them on to rescue His poor creatures from that foe whom St. Peter himself likens to a roaring lion going about, seeking whom he may devour.

" Swifter than eagles, stronger than lions ! " This imagery has run down through history and literature. Profane history speaks of one warlike king as *Cœur de Lion*, and ecclesiastical history speaks of a great bishop as the *Eagle of Meaux*. A forgotten ode of Smollett's invokes the Spirit of Independence as " Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye ". We venture to call these heroes of the Church, these apostolic princes, eagle-eyed and lion-hearted, while we go on to think of their faith and their zeal.

" This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith " (1 John v. 4). St. John said this, speaking in the name of all Christians ; but St. Peter and St. Paul might have said so in a more special sense, speaking for themselves personally. They proved their victorious faith, as they proved their ardent

love and zeal, both by words and by works, for both words and works were needed.

St. Ignatius of Loyola begins his contemplation on Divine Love, which is the climax and consummation of his Spiritual Exercises, by laying down the austere principle that love ought to be placed more in works than in words. Yes, certainly—more, but not solely; for this principle must not be pushed to the length of undervaluing the worth and efficacy of loving words. God Himself, the true and supreme Lover, does not confine His love to deeds, but even under a sterner dispensation addressed to His creatures countless expressions of tender and yearning affection. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Son, give Me thy heart. Place Me as a seal on thy heart. Return to Me, return to Me, and why will ye die, O house of Israel!” And if the Almighty Creator and Sovereign Lord deigned to stoop to such human tenderness, how much more must His feeble creatures be eager to supplement what their love does by what it would desire to do, to loving deeds joining loving thoughts and loving words.

St. Peter and St. Paul were so pre-eminently men of action, and proved their faith and love so well by the works that they wrought, that an apology has seemed necessary for seeking our first proof of their faith and love in the words that they have left written. From St. Peter especially we might not have expected such a proof. St. Paul indeed, ardent and eloquent and a trained scholar, surprises us less by pouring out his soul in glowing words. Yet St. Peter also was the author of two Epistles, short, but in their

vigour and dignity and earnestness, worthy, even under their human aspect, of his great, fatherly, apostolic heart. And almost the first words of his first Epistle are these: "Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who according to His great mercy hath regenerated us unto an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that cannot fade, reserved in heaven for you, who, by the power of God, are kept by faith unto salvation—that the trial of your faith may be found unto glory and honour at the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord—Whom, having not seen, you love, in Whom also now, though you see Him not, you believe, and believing shall rejoice with joy unspeakable, receiving the end of your faith; even the salvation of your souls."

Faith, faith, faith! See how everything is grounded on faith. Certainly not the barren, self-sufficient, and presumptuous faith of impious and absurd and, I trust, obsolete Heresy that would fain dispense with good works, but the humble and fruitful faith that worketh by charity.

And so the Apostle goes on, urging earnestly the necessity of faith as the foundation of all sanctity and of all hope of salvation.

Still more is faith the predominant topic of the many long Epistles, so marvellous in their depth of thought and their Divine eloquence, which St. Paul addressed to the various Churches of his time, and to the faithful of all time, and of which a man as dispassionate as if he were what he almost was—a pagan—has said emphatically: "Of all human writings those which perhaps have produced the deepest

effect on the history of the world have been St. Paul's Epistles". And he proceeds to discover in them "extraordinary intellectual insight, extraordinary sincerity, extraordinary resolution to speak out the truth as he perceived it, as if driven on by some impelling internal necessity".¹

Yes, St. Paul is himself a glorious proof of our Lord's Divinity. That such a mind and heart as his manifestly were—that a man whom Victor Hugo, and others who pretend to fling aside the yoke of Christianity, always reckon among the ten or twelve greatest men that have ever trod this earth—that such a man should bow down before Jesus with adoring faith, should burn with such love towards One to whom he was drawn neither by the magnetism of close contact nor by the glamour of distance; such faith and such love as shine out from all of St. Paul's writings seem to be of themselves almost sufficient to prove the Divinity of Him who is the object of them.

In these Epistles of St. Paul faith is directly or indirectly the theme of almost every page. The mere repetitions of the word "fides" fill many leaves of those volumes called Concordances, in which such references to Holy Scripture are grouped together. The immense majority of these texts about faith are from St. Paul, who might be called the Apostle of Faith, as St. John is called the Apostle of Love.

Yet might not St. Paul, and still more might not St. Peter, dispute even with St. John himself also the possession of this other glorious title? We give

¹ "Carlyle's Life in London," by J. A. Froude, Vol. II, p. 266.

it to St. John chiefly because he himself takes a meek pride in calling himself the disciple whom Jesus loved. But that distinction would be justified by the fact that Jesus bestowed the greatest outward marks of tenderness on St. John as the youngest and simplest and most amiable of his Apostles, and as being that virgin-disciple to whose personal care the Virgin Mother was to be confided. The Divine Lover of souls loves souls according to their worth and holiness and dignity and according to their love for Him. Who loved Jesus more than St. Peter? St. Augustine tells us that Jesus asked St. Peter, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" although, reading the hearts of all, He already knew perfectly well that St. Peter did indeed love Him better than all the others. The very question implies this, although the great penitent, checking humbly his former generous rashness, dares not to answer *yes* to that question—"Lovest thou Me more than these?"—but only says for the third time, meekly, distrustfully, a little sadly, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee". Yes, He knew it well; else He would not have gone on at once to reward the triple confession (which atoned for the triple denial) by bidding St. Peter to feed both His lambs and His sheep, to be shepherd over His whole flock, head of His whole Church—people, priests, and bishops—His vicegerent on earth, supreme pastor under Jesus Christ Himself, Who is our high priest for ever and shepherd of our souls.

But St. Paul was even less exposed than he to fall under the doom of that curse which he himself pro-

nounced—"If anyone love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema?" (I Cor. XVI.). If ever words could prove the sincerity of love, St. Paul's words do so. The thirteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians is the most magnificent panegyric on charity with which the God of charity has ever inspired the heart or tongue of any of his creatures. And the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans ends with this famous series of questions: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword? . . . But in all these things we overcome because of Him who hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Better than even by all these burning words, both St. Paul and St. Peter proved by their deeds the reality of their faith and their love. They proved it by their whole lives from the day when they were called separately by their apostolic vocation to a special share in our Lord's shame and sorrows and toils, till that later day when they were called conjointly by their triumphant martyrdom to a special share in our Lord's glory and joy.

Their apostolic careers began very differently, and far apart, though they were to end together. Simon, before seeing or hearing our Lord, believed in Him on the word of his brother Andrew, who was before

him in order of time, though far behind him in order of dignity. And when he is plying unsuccessfully his humble craft of fisherman, and when he sees our Lord's blessing followed by a wonderful draught of fish, he whispers to his own heart as he will cry aloud on a very similar occasion after the Resurrection, "It is the Lord!"—and he flings himself on the ground at the feet of Jesus, saying, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man". Ah! it is not the cry of humility like that which will make our Lord depart; that will rather draw Him nearer, and make Him say to us more earnestly, "Follow Me!" So he said to St. Peter; and Peter, leaving all, followed Jesus.

A harder struggle lay between Saul of Tarsus and the faith. The very thunderbolts of heaven were needed to hurl him prostrate at the feet of the Redeemer. By the privilege of birth a Roman citizen, well educated and refined, though in accordance with the praiseworthy custom of Hebrew youth he had learned a trade which he afterwards exercised, versed in the strictest traditions of the proudest and most pretentious sect, one of those haughty Pharisees who alone seemed to arouse the indignation of the meek and humble heart of Jesus, St. Paul opposed much more formidable obstacles to the onset of Divine grace. He had even begun to distinguish himself among the persecutors of the infant Church of Christ, and he had taken his part in the first martyrdom. But zeal even for error, when error is sincere, is better than a cowardly indifference. And so Jesus from His throne in heaven looked on this young man also and loved

him, even as during His mortal life He had looked on that nameless youth in the Gospel who, if he had not gone away sad, might have become another St. Paul. Saul of Tarsus is on his way to Damascus to harass the disciples of Jesus there, when suddenly he is struck down as if by an invisible arm, and a heavenly light shines around him which lights up the depths of his soul, and he cries out at last: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

In that first moment of his conversion we see how perfect were already St. Paul's faith and love, when we hear our Lord Himself saying of him: "This man is to Me a vessel of election, to carry My name before the Gentiles, for I will show him what great things he must suffer for My sake". No mild disguise, no softening down of the hard terms. "What great things he must suffer for My sake." Our Lord knew that such an announcement would not repel but allure this heroic nature: for already his grand soul thirsted for suffering, and he felt already what he was soon after to utter: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ".

The cross! But in the depths of the Divine condescension there is a deeper abyss than even the mystery of the cross.

In cruce latebat sola deitas,

Sed hic latet simul et humanitas.

On the cross was veiled thy godhead's splendour;

Here thy manhood lieth hidden too.

The Blessed Eucharist is called by excellence *mysterium fidei*, "the mystery of faith," and so it is called in the most solemn moment of the Holy Sacri-

fice itself, during the very consecration of the Chalice. To this mystery of faith both St. Peter and St. Paul bear testimony in the most remarkable manner. The Holy Ghost provided that it should be so, in order that unbelief might be more and more without excuse.

And indeed it is a comfort and a blessing that the very points which Heresy attacks most fiercely are in many respects the plainest of all to the humble docility of faith. The true heretical spirit hates most of all or objects most of all to our Catholic doctrine about the Pope, the Blessed Virgin, and the Holy Eucharist. Now these three—the Primacy of St. Peter, the Divine Maternity, and finally, the reality of the Eucharistic promises—these three dogmas are either plainer in themselves or put forward in Scripture more plainly than many other dogmas just as difficult which Heresy professes to accept. “Thou art Peter”; “Behold thy Mother”; “This is My Body”; *Tu es Petrus*; *Ecce Mater tua*; *Hoc et corpus meum*—these are the three great war-cries of our faith.

But in meditating now on the faith of our two great Apostles we are to confine ourselves to only one of these—namely, the Blessed Eucharist. When the Blessed Eucharist was first promised by our Divine Lord, the faith of many, as St. John relates in the sixth chapter of the Gospel, could not stand the shock, and they said: “This is a hard saying—who can bear it?” And they walked no more with Jesus. And Jesus, who was to shed His heart’s blood for each of those poor souls, lets them depart, though,

if He had not meant what He said, but only what Heresy pretends He meant, one word of explanation would have kept them with Him. And then in the keenness of His disappointment He turns for compensation, for comfort, to His faithful disciples, and asks them: "Will you, too, leave Me?" St. Peter, their head, answers eagerly for them all, as he always does: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Yes, though His last words, repeated thrice in spite of the remonstrances of incredulity, were these: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you".

Still stronger is the witness borne by St. Paul. Considering the nature of his Epistles, the testimony that he bears to the Blessed Eucharist is altogether extraordinary. It would have been quite natural if there had not been a single allusion to this mysterious subject in all his writings. But the Holy Ghost arranged very differently. On this point more than on any other his testimony is explicit and emphatic. Here he assumes the very functions of an Evangelist, and in the eleventh chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians he narrates the circumstances of the institution of this Sacrament as minutely as St. Matthew, or St. Mark, or St. Luke. For what other point of our faith does St. Paul do so much? For none.

We have passed freely from one to the other of these glorious saints as the name and nature of this feast prompted. But there is one transcendent tribute to the faith of St. Peter for which St. Paul

furnishes no parallel—namely, where St. Peter's *Tu es Christus* is followed instantly by the *Tu es Petrus* of Christ. His confession of faith, "Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God," is the occasion on which our Lord declares that Peter is the rock on which the Christian Church is so to be built that the gates of hell shall prevail against her never. *Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia*. "Wherever Peter is," says St. Ambrose, "the Church of God is there."

But, as we said at the beginning, it is their union in martyrdom that joins St. Paul and St. Peter together in this feast of to-day. At the very moment of conferring this highest dignity upon St. Peter, our Lord warned him in mysterious words that it would lead him in the end to what would then have become the glorious instead of the ignominious, death of the cross; for meanwhile Jesus our Lord was to die on the cross. "This he said" (says St. John, interpreting words in which we should never have discovered this meaning) "this he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God." He was crucified like his Divine Master, but at his own entreaty with his head downward, for greater torment and ignominy, as being unworthy to die as Jesus had died, unworthy to lift his eyes to heaven in this consummation of the lifelong sacrifice of his life.

St. Paul's Roman citizenship debarred him from this honour of crucifixion. He was beheaded on the same day with St. Peter, having lain for months in the same Mamertine prison. Their Calvary is now covered with the palace of the Vatican and the Church of St. Peter—that most renowned of Churches,

worthy almost of its name, worthy almost of its office as the Cathedral of the Christian Universe. Here the relics of St. Peter and St. Paul are deposited together.

O Roma felix! So the Church sings proudly in the first vespers of this feast. "O happy Rome, who has been consecrated by the blood of two such mighty princes! Purpled by their gore, thou alone excellest all the glories of the world."

Thus, therefore, are the names of St. Peter and St. Paul united inseparably. St. Peter, indeed, was alone appointed by the Divine Founder of the Christian Church, the one supreme visible head of that Church; yet such was the part assigned to St. Paul in its establishment and its propagation that the Roman pontiffs, successors of St. Peter, even when speaking as heads of the Church, declare that they speak with the authority, not of St. Peter alone, but of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul.

And so it is also that, when the priest at the beginning of the Mass, bent down under the weight of his sins and the sins of the people, before daring to mount the altar, invokes the pardon of God through the intercession of His saints, he names out of the saints of the earth only these two. The Blessed Virgin and the Baptist belong to a higher and more heavenly sphere, almost as unearthly as the Archangel Michael himself; but of mere earthly saints the priest before Mass and the penitent before confession mention the names of none except those two whom we have named so often together. So in other parts of the Mass and in many of the Church's

prayers outside the Mass St. Peter and St. Paul are linked together. "Glorious princes of the Church, as they loved one another in life, so also in death they were not divided."

Nor are they divided in the eternal life into which that death instantly ushered them. There, among the glorious princes of the celestial court, on two of the highest and brightest among the thrones of heaven, reign side by side the holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, whose prayers and protection we now invoke, and will always invoke till St. Peter himself opens for us the gate of heaven.

To these thoughts in prose on SS. Peter and Paul we may append the sonnet of an old Catholic poet, Henry Constable (1562-1613).

He that for fear his Master did deny
And at a maiden's voice amazèd stood,
The mightiest monarch of the world withstood,
And on his Master's cross rejoiced to die.

He whose blind zeal did rage with cruelty,
And helped to shed the first of martyr's blood.
By light from heaven his blindness understood,
And with the chief Apostle chained doth lie.

Oh, three times happy two! O golden pair!
Who with your blood did lay the Church's ground
Within that fatal town which twins did found,
And settled there the Hebrew fisher's chair,
Where first the Latin shepherd raised his throne,
And since the world and Church were ruled by one.

ST. MATTHEW.

(SEPTEMBER 21.)

ST. MATTHEW, whose feast is kept on the 21st day of September, deserves in a very special degree our veneration and our confidence, for he unites in himself three of the highest dignities and noblest offices that God can confer on any of His human creatures ; he was at the same time, Apostle, Evangelist, and Martyr. The mere union of these titles, even if we knew nothing about the saint's special manner of earning them, would be enough to show that he must on earth have had such treasures of grace and merit, and must now have in heaven such glory and such power as entitle him in a pre-eminent degree to our reverence and trustful love.

The magnificent array of titles of honour which have gradually gushed forth from the Church's heart in praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and which we call the Litany of Loretto, ends with a series of eight invocations proclaiming her Queen of all the various orders of created rational beings, all the ranks of the blessed inhabitants of heaven. The Mother of Jesus is saluted as Queen of the Angels who adored her Divine Infant as their God. *Regina Angelorum, ora pro nobis.* She is Queen of all the heavenly host ;

and she is Queen also of God's human creatures, of whom she herself is one. The saints of the old Law looked forward to her who was promised in the first moment of the Fall, the Woman whose seed was to crush the serpent's head, the Mother of Him who was to come; and so in her Litany we next salute the Blessed Virgin as Queen of the Patriarchs and Queen of the Prophets, who, like Isaiah, were full of the hope of her, the Virgin, who should conceive and bring forth the Saviour. *Regina Patriarcharum, Regina Prophetarum, ora pro nobis.*

But when we come to the Christian ages, the saints that rank highest are the Apostles and martyrs—only these are commemorated in the canon of the Mass, in the most solemn moments before and after the consecration; and, before the confessors and virgins and all saints, we hail the Blessed Virgin as Queen of Apostles and Queen of Martyrs. *Regina Apostolorum, Regina Martyrum, ora pro nobis.*

Both of these highest earthly dignities and glories were united in St. Matthew. He was one of Christ's chosen Apostles. "The Apostleship was," says Father Faber, "a dignity and a grace unequalled except by the Divine Maternity, the Wardenship of St. Joseph, and perhaps the office of the Precursor"—only *perhaps*, considering the office itself apart from the personal sanctity and unearthly austerity of the Baptist. "What gifts and graces, what inward beauties and heroisms," exclaims the holy man whom we have just quoted, "are implied in this vocation to be one of the Incarnate Word's selected twelve." Think who Jesus Christ was and what He was come for,

and think how near the Apostles were to His person, and what a share they were allowed in His work. Elected by the eternal wisdom of God, chosen out from all to be the personal friends and constant companions of Jesus Christ our Lord—to see and hear Him familiarly at all times during the years that He gave to the society of men outside of the holy house of Nazareth—to share His privations and to receive from Him every day a thousand marks of His thoughtful love, and then after His departure to be the founders and pillars of His Church: what earthly dignity can equal so sublime a vocation? And think, too, of the manner of St. Matthew's calling, of the immediate sacrifice that he had to make. This was the ground on which he received the beautiful dedication of Father Faber's "Creator and Creature," which some consider the greatest of his books: "To St. Matthew, the Apostle and Evangelist of the Incarnate Word, the pattern of obedience to Divine inspirations, the teacher and the example of correspondence to grace, who left all for God—self and the world and wealth—at God's one word, without question, without reserve, without delay, to be for ever in the Church, the doctor, the prophet, and the patron, the comfort and the justification of those who follow heavenly calls in the world's despite and who give themselves in love as he gave himself, without limit or condition, as creatures to their Creator."

St. Matthew was not only an Apostle, but a Martyr. He crowned his apostolic labours among the Ethiopians with the glory of martyrdom. "Martyr" means "witness," and St. Matthew witnessed unto

blood, he bore testimony to the truth of the faith that he preached by dying for it ; and if the beautiful tradition can be trusted, which tells us of Iphigenia, the king's daughter, consecrating herself to God as the first Christian nun, St. Matthew, her spiritual father, was the special martyr of virginity.

And yet again, he was not only Apostle and Martyr but Evangelist also. This is a title not commemorated in the Litany of Loretto. The Blessed Virgin is not saluted there as Queen of Evangelists ; but such she is. *Maria conservabat omnia verba haec.* "Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart" (Luke II. 19). St. Matthew and the other evangelists learned much from the Mother of Jesus. There is one person of whom St. Matthew's Gospel tells us most of all the evangelists, and there is another of whom it tells us least. Of the little that we know of the great hidden saint, Joseph, we owe the greatest part to St. Matthew. One might almost think that it is in reward for this that the Church has shared with St. Matthew the very prayer she addresses to St. Joseph. The Collects of their respective Masses are substantially the same, differing only in the words that describe the personal offices of each. On the other hand, the person about whom St. Matthew's Gospel tells us least is St. Matthew himself. He puts forward only what tells against himself, the disparaging title of Matthew, a publican ; while other evangelists speak of him as Levi, son of Alphaeus. His generous heart is shown not only in the banquet he gives in honour of his new Master, but also in the guests he admits to his table. He does not, in the

first ardour of his conversion, turn against his old friends and companions, but he invites publicans and sinners to meet our Lord; and it is on this occasion that our Lord makes the consoling declaration: "They that are well have no need of a physician but they that are sick. I came not to call the just but sinners".

Matthew and John are the only ones who unite the three characters of Apostle, Evangelist, and Martyr. Of the two we are drawn to love more tenderly the one whom Jesus loved; but St. Matthew, also, is a most attractive saint; and it ought not to be hard for us to feel great confidence, great reverence and great love when we say: "St. Matthew, pray for us".

In the great religious movement which gave to the Catholic Church Newman and Faber, and Ward and Manning, and Aubrey de Vere, and many other gifted souls, one of the saddest failures was the author of "The Christian Year". It is easier to understand how Pusey remained to the end a Puseyite; but that one like John Keble, so gentle, so Catholic-minded, so attached to John Henry Newman, should die in his illogical Anglicanism, is very sad and very strange. I think of him now on account of his very unsatisfactory hymn for the feast of St. Matthew. There is a very long and irrelevant preamble before we come to our gracious Lord,

Who not in vain beside yon breezy lake
Bade the meek Publican his gainful seat forsake.

Out of ten stanzas this is almost the only one that refers directly to St. Matthew:—

At once he rose, and left his gold ;
 His treasure and his heart
 Transferred where he shall safe behold
 Earth and her idols part ;
 While he beside his endless store
 Shall sit, and floods unceasing pour
 Of Christ's true riches o'er all time and space,
 First angel of His Church, first steward of His grace.

More direct and explicit is the tribute paid to our Apostle by one whom Keble knew—Isaac Williams, author of "The Cathedral". Which of the two was the first to call the Sea of Tiberias "a breezy lake?" In the last stanza "his" is twice printed with a capital *H*, which changes the meaning considerably. This seems to be a misprint, which accordingly we have corrected here.

Nor Pharisaic school, nor harnessed train
 Of Roman state, nor power nor thoughtful gain,
 Nor breezy lake, where circling mountains rise,
 Nor Lebanon's snowy top in summer skies,
 Could to thy longing eyes afford repose,
 Good Levi, till they found the Man of Woes !

Beneath thy lowly roof I see Him come,¹
 An honoured guest ; the Pharisee's stern gloom
 Sitting aloof,—in calm and humble gaze
 The Galilean twelve,—th' half-pleas'd amaze
 Of Publicans—and mourning Eremite
 Shrinking apart : yet, seen or out of sight,
 Manifold words of wisdom find them out,
 And in each heart an eye that looks throughout.

But lo ! again his hospitable store,
 Levi prepares, unfolding wide the door
 Of his blest Gospel, 'neath whose sacred roof
 All may behold the Christ and learn by proof,

¹ St. Luke v. 29.

E'en now as then, within each secret soul
 An eye is found : seek we or shun control,
 All see the Son of Man ; each doth invest
 His form with hues drawn from his own breast.

A pious American convert, Harriet Skidmore, who died in San Francisco in 1904, keeps still closer to the point.

Matthew the Publican, at Capharnaum's Gate,
 Sits, gathering there the grudg'd, unwilling toll
 In stolid calm,—though sneers of angry hate
 Greet the scorn'd servitor of Rome's control.

He answers not, he recks not—none he heeds
 Amid the throng—nor seemeth e'en to see
 Forms Pharisaic, or, from prancing steeds
 The gay Herodians, tossing careless fee—

And, though he heard His frequent steps, Who trod
 Lost earth to save it, yet, unconscious still,
 The Sacred Presence of that Hidden God
 In his dull'd heart awoke no reverent thrill,

Till that sweet day whereon the Master turned
 His radiant glance full on him, pityingly,
 And while his soul with new, strange ardour burned
 That Master's Voice said softly : " Follow Me ! "

Ah ! favoured Publican, thou heedest *now*,
 And, swiftly answering to that tender call,
 Thou givest to Love thy Apostolic vow,
 For His sweet sake serenely leaving all.

Dear, chosen follower of the Sacred Heart !
 To sinful souls, world-hated, reckless, lone,
 'Mid throngs like thee, yet outcast and apart,
 Be that blest look of boundless pity shown.

Aye, though their Lord hath passed unheeded by,
 For years, perchance,—oh, may that sweet day be
 Theirs, too, at last, when they shall meet His Eye,
 And, hearing, heed His tender, " Follow Me ! "

Another American, not a convert, but of Irish hereditary faith, Miss Eleanor Donnelly, has turned the second chapter of St. Mark's Gospel into "The Ballad of St. Matthew's Call".

*"That you may know the Son of Man
Hath power on earth to pardon sin,
Arise!" He said: "take up thy bed,
And go thy way thy house within!"*

The palsied man, made whole this hour,
Hath ta'en his bed, and gone his way;
"Glory to God, who gives such pow'r
To men on earth!"—the people say.

Then, forthwith, swarming to the beach
Where walks the Master by the sea,
They taste the honey of His speech,
And praise His wondrous ministry.

What time He goeth grave and sweet,
Before the fast incoming tide,
The beggars track His blessed Feet,
The children gambol at His side.

They laugh—they leap—they kiss His Hands—
Till lo! He leaves them on the shore;
The House of Customs open stands,
And Jesus enters at its door.

A light shines through His lovely Face
(Soon to be dimm'd by blood and bruise!)
He turns where Levi in his place
Is taking tax from black-brow'd Jews.

A simple, steadfast, silent man,
His gown well-girded at the loins,
With downcast eyes, the Publican
Seems busied with his heap of coins.

The Master draweth near. His gaze
Is fix'd on Levi yearningly;
Levi no longer—*Matthew*, raise
Thy head! He calls thee: "*Follow Me!*"

Glad as the bride whose exiled spouse
 Bids her, at last, with him to roam,
 Bids her forsake her father's house,
 And seek afar a love-bought home ;
 Thrill'd by that Voice, in whose rich swell
 All heav'nly lutes and lyres combine ;
 Drawn by the strange, magnetic spell
 Of that grand front, that Face Divine—
 Up springs the son of Alpheus
 With flushing cheek, with kindling eye ;
 His eager hands all tremulous,
 Thrusting the coins and parchments by.
 He bursts the group of Israelites
 That throngs his stall, behind, before ;
 Through guards, officials, parasites,
 That stare and whisper at the door—
 He presses close on that new Friend
 Who calls him to Love's glorious tryst ;
 Dangers may threaten, death impend,—
 He quits all things to follow Christ !

A Protestant clergyman, Henry Alford, Dean of
 Canterbury, is much better known as author of "The
 Queen's English"—a pleasant book about sundry
 mistakes that fairly educated people are apt to make
 in writing and speaking—than by his sermons or his
 poems. Among these last is one on the "Call of
 Matthew"—:—

"Arise and follow Me !"
 Who answers to the call ?
 Not Ruler, Scribe, or Pharisee,
 Proud and regardless all.
 "Arise, and follow Me !"
 The Publican hath heard
 And by the deep Gennesaret Sea
 Obeys the Maker's word.

Thenceforth in joy and fear,
Where'er the Saviour trod,
Among the Twelve his place was near
The Holy One of God.

His is no honour mean,
For Christ to write and die :
Apostle, Saint, Evangelist,
His record is on high.

The Rev. J. S. B. Monsell, Vicar of Egham, near Windsor, was an Irishman, a cousin of a good man and pious convert, Mr. William Monsell, M.P., who, when he ceased to be Postmaster-General in Gladstone's first ministry, became the first Lord Emly. I remember Mr. Monsell contrasting the large sale of his kinsman's poems with the limited circulation of those of Aubrey de Vere, a poet of a vastly higher order. The Vicar of Egham writes thus of our St. Matthew :—

From fisher's net, from fig-tree's shade.
God gathers whom He will ;
Touched by His grace, all men are made
His purpose to fulfil.

But not alone from shady nooks,
Fresh with life's noontide dew ;
From humble walks or quiet books
Calls He His chosen few.

Out of the busiest haunts of life,
Its most engrossing cares,
Its nightly travail, daily strife,
Self-woven golden snares—

He for His vineyard doth provide,
His gentle voice doth move
The world's keen votaries to His side
With His persuasive love,

So Matthew left his golden gains
At the great Maker's call ;
His soul the love of Christ constrains
Freely to give up all.

The tide of life was at its flow,
Rose higher day by day ;
But he a higher life would know
Than that which round him lay.

Nor Fortune, bright with favouring smile,
Can tempt him with her store ;
Too long she did his heart beguile,
He will be hers no more.

To one sweet Voice his soul doth list,
And, at its " Follow Me,"
Apostle and Evangelist
Henceforth for Christ is he.

O Saviour ! when prosperity
Makes this world hard to leave,
And all its pomps and vanity
Their meshes round us weave ;

When Mammon with its subtle chain,
Fair because forged in gold,
The soul, which up to Heaven would strain,
In captive thrall doth hold ;

When life with all its balmiest hours
In sunshine round us lies,
And, bee-like, 'mid a thousand flowers
Fond, fickle fancy flies :

Oh ! grant us grace that to Thy call
We may obedient be,
And, cheerfully forsaking all,
May follow only Thee.

Miss Skidmore, as I have said, was a Catholic, and so is Miss Donnelly ; but Dean Alford and Keble, and Williams, and the Vicar of Egham, were Protestants.

The only other Catholic verses that I know of in praise of St. Matthew are my own. I will venture to give them as a fuller and more minute account of St. Matthew than has been furnished in all the prose and verse consecrated to him in the preceding pages :—

Levi the Publican beside his door
 Marked some poor peasants slowly passing by;
 But One amid them walked who seemed far more
 Than those rude fishermen, so grand His eye,
 With such majestic mildness raised on high—
 To catch His words His comrades forward bent.
 And Levi trembled as the band drew nigh,
 For a deep-searching glance was towards him sent,
 And Jesus whispered soft, *Come with Me!*—and he went.

Levi that night for his new Master made
 A feast, which he with his old friends would share—
 Sinners like him, yet he was not afraid,
 For He who came not for the just was there
 To lead their spirits captive unaware
 And wean from earth each earthy, selfish heart.
 Thus did that hospitable feast prepare
 Some souls perchance for the Apostle's part,
 And thou of such high calls, dear Saint! the patron art.¹

She heard that call, the Royal Ethiop maid,
 Iphigenia, thy heroic child;
 She changed her crown for one that ne'er can fade,
 And faltered not, but, meekly scornful, smiled
 When the new King, with heathen crime defiled,
 Of her pure heart would rob her Spouse Divine.
 Then Hirtacus, with jealous fury wild,
 Slew thee, her teacher, at the altar-shrine:
 And thus a martyr's death for purity was thine.

¹ Father Faber, quoted some pages earlier, calls St. Matthew "the pattern of obedience to Divine vocations, the model of prompt submission to Divine inspiration".

Apostle, martyr, first evangelist—
Like only John, yet martyr more than he;
Thy greatness, like a peak through cloud and mist,
Looms all the vaster that we dimly see
Less what thou art than what thou needs must be.
Chosen of God for purpose so Divine,
Divinest gifts are surely rife in thee.
And so my heart hath round thee learned to twine
Closer the more it grows (God help me!) like to thine.

For thou hast lived too near the beating heart
Of Him who wept o'er Lazarus not to yearn
In pity towards me and to take my part
When sinful ways would call for vengeance stern.
Yes, far too long with Jesus not to earn
Some of His kindness for thy spirit's dower,
For oft hast thou, their lessons sweet to learn,
Watched all His tender looks, aye, hour by hour,
And all His deeds of grace and all His words of power.

Came it from thee, that touching trait which rests
In fond tradition?—how that He who said,
“The foxes have their holes, the birds their nests,
But *I* have not whereon to lay My head”—
How that, one summer night, He made His bed
Out on the homeless heath and round Him lay
The wearied Twelve. And so the dark night sped,
While slept the Sleepless, He the Light of day,
He the All-seeing slept, but rose at dawn to pray.

Perhaps 'twas thou that, waking up that night,
Marked the kind Master steal from each to each.
As if afraid to break their slumbers light,
With muffled tread and low-breathed, lulling speech,
And gentlest art that mother's heart doth teach,
Smoothering the pillow of her cradled pet.
Even so low the Eternal's care doth reach,
The slumberer's dress in warmer folds to set,
Wrapping them closer round against the night-dews wet.

If not for this, for much of written lore,
We thank thee, Matthew, pensman of the Word!
But most that thou, alone of all the Four,
Tallest to us of Mary's spouse and Lord.
And hence the Church doth gracefully accord
The Foster-father's altar-prayer to thee—
None higher could her Liturgy afford:
Praying as *I* do now, that all which she
Fails else to gain, gained through thy prayers may be.

Take, then, this lay by filial love inspired—
For words of love can reach e'en to thy throne.
My loving words, how mean soe'er attired,
Thou wilt not scornfully, dear Saint, disown.
Ah, no! but when my cheerful exile's flown,
When earth's long task is done, in realms beyond
Wilt smiling bid me welcome as thine own;
And I shall be as when my first life dawned,
Thy namesake, client, child—more near but not more fond.

The pathetic incident referred to in two of these last stanzas did *not* come to us through St. Matthew, but through St. Peter. Père de Ligny, S.J., in the forty-ninth chapter of his admirable "Life of Christ," uses it as an illustration of our Lord's words (Matt. xx. 29): "The Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto but to minister". "What Pope St. Clement relates of his master, St. Peter, may be set down here. He says that, when the holy Apostle saw anyone sleeping, the tears came to his eyes. When asked the reason, he answered that this reminded him of his dear Lord, who, while they all slept, kept watch for all, and, if the covering happened to be disarranged for any of them, would settle the poor couch again without disturbing the sleeper." When we try to realize the intimate relations between our Divine Redeemer and His disciples during the

years of their preparation for the apostleship, we feel more than ever the force of His tender appeal, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart".

I chance to have preserved a scrap containing a newspaper report of a sermon preached by Cardinal Newman at Birmingham soon after his return from Rome on the occasion of his elevation to the Roman purple. A reporter's condensation into five minutes of half an hour of John Henry Newman's language must give a very faint idea of what that language was. Much of the magic of his style must have disappeared in passing through such a medium. Yet I am loth to let the tribute perish that such a man has paid to my Saint. I have made the abstract approach a little nearer to what the Cardinal spoke by changing the reporter's third person and past tense into the present tense and first person.

"St. Matthew differs from the other Apostles in the circumstances of his conversion and his life before conversion. Most of them were engaged in fishing or other business of a low nature around the lake which our Blessed Lord frequented during His public ministry, and their trades and professions were innocent ; whereas, under the circumstances of the time, the profession of St. Matthew was one in which the temptations were so great, and the company with whom he had to work was such that it was hardly to be supposed that anyone could be what was called a publican without great danger and risk to his soul. The taxes payable to the Romans in those days were what was called 'farmed,' as is the case in some

countries now, and those who had paid a sum of money for the privilege of collecting and appropriating them were under a great temptation to be extortionate. We know that from what goes on in this day in some countries, where we find people groaning under the inflictions of men whose object it is to collect as much as possible in return for the sum they have paid to the Government. The publicans, therefore, were very odious to the populations at large, and especially to conquered populations such as the Jews. The Jews felt it extremely; the iron entered into their souls from the extortion of those great men, or little men, whichever they might be. Therefore, for a Jew to become a publican was as great an offence as could be committed against his people—it was most unpatriotic as well as most cruel and wicked.

“That seems to be the position in which St. Matthew was when he was converted. It is remarkable that our Lord should have spoken with such tenderness of the publicans, and that among them should be found even an Apostle. Many reasons might be given for it, but we know that one special object was to humble the proud and exalt the humble. St. Paul, speaking of the Christian vocation, said it was not one which especially referred to the great, to the learned, or the wise, but to those who were of low esteem among men—those who seemed not to have it in their power, and who indeed had it not in their power, to become religious. St. Matthew’s case was what would be called now ‘a sudden conversion’. Of course, sudden conversions in that sense are possible; but I think that, if we look into the matter,

we shall find that only in certain aspects is a conversion sudden. In the case of Simon Peter's call at the Sea of Galilee, as recorded in St. Matthew, there was no indication of anything having preceded it to lead up to it; but we learn from St. John that there had been a previous conversation between our Lord and Simon. There might have been something similar in St. Matthew's case, notwithstanding the abruptness with which it is introduced.

"It is pleasing and edifying to think of the workings of God's grace in human hearts, and how mercifully He guides them on into truth. God be praised that so much goes on in the minds of men who seem outwardly so unlikely, showing that God has not given them up. It is a thought which should keep us from judging people. We cannot help judging actions, for actions are right or wrong; but when we go on to look at the person and to say that he is certainly hopeless or certainly hopeful, we go beyond our measure and are most likely to be wrong. The proclamation of the angel who announced the Nativity was "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will". Our Blessed Lord when He was on earth looked to men of good will. He knew there was scattered through the world, in the hearts of people in general, a great deal of good will, which was feeble and hopeless if left to itself, but which, if He poured his grace upon it, would be made powerful. So now I believe that in a great town like this, where men are tossed to and fro, apparently without help or with no hope, so many not having the Sacraments, so many knowing very little of their

duties and of the future, going on in a reckless way, merely thinking of to-day and of this world, there is, in spite of appearances, the Holy spirit of God working in their hearts, so that they have thoughts and feelings above themselves and desires for a better state. I believe this pleading of God the Holy Ghost in the hearts of men is very common, because now there is so much education, so much thought, so much evil and so much infidelity, which brings the question before men and does not allow them to be thoughtless. By the mercy of God, that which seems so much against religion is by His grace turned in many cases the other way; because, when men find that infidelity stares them in the face, there is something within them which tells them they are born for something greater."

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

(DECEMBER 27.)

AMONG the first disciples of St. Ignatius, who were in a certain sense co-founders of the Society of Jesus, there is no Christian name shared by two of them. There is only one Ignatius, Francis, Peter, James, Alphonsus, Nicholas, Simon, John, and Paschasius. It was not so with the Apostles of the Lord Himself. Two bore the name of Simon (gloriously changed for one of them). Two bore the name of James, and there were two Judes—though indeed the name of the traitor is never shortened into that familiar form. There was only one John in the College of the Apostles; but it was necessary to distinguish him from the man who was “sent from God whose name was John”. We call the latter John the Baptist or the Precursor; and his more youthful namesake is called St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Beloved, St. John the Divine, the Apostle of Love, the Disciple whom Jesus loved. It is he, probably, more than his first austere master, who has contributed most to the popularity of the name, exemplified in the twenty-two Popes and the many saints who bore that name, the closest rival both among Popes and saints being perhaps Gregory.



Domenichino, pinxit]

ST. JOHN EVANGELIST

[Photo.: Anderson, Rome

The Apostle St. John has always been cherished with special affection and reverence in sacred literature and art, and in the hearts of the faithful; and this chiefly because he was, first of all, dearest to the Heart of Jesus Himself. The pathetic wistfulness with which he claims the glory of being the disciple whom Jesus loved did not spring from vanity but from the deepest humility and the tenderest love. He shows his humility in the way that he describes his first meeting with his Divine Master. He had already shown his goodwill and his earnestness in following his great namesake; but when the Baptist pointed out the Lamb of God who was to take away the sins of the world, his ardent soul could not be content till he had devoted himself to the service of this greater, this supreme, Teacher. Therefore, St. Andrew and he—for manifestly he himself was that companion of Andrew whom he leaves unnamed—he and Andrew follow Jesus without daring to overtake Him or address Him, till our Lord turns round and speaks to them. Then they summon up courage to ask, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" "Come and see." They went with Him, and became thus the first followers of the Redeemer, the first Christians.

The transcendent privileges of St. John are well summarized in the first responsory of Matins on his feast, which fittingly is placed close to the feast of our Lord, in the first glow of Christmas, on 27 December. "Greatly to be honoured is Blessed John, who at the Last Supper reclined upon the breast of the Lord; to whom Christ on the cross commended His Mother, virgin to virgin." And in

the third responsory: "This is the most blessed Evangelist and Apostle, John, who by the privilege of the chief love merited to be honoured more highly than the rest. This is that disciple whom Jesus loved."

It is less necessary to develop further St. John's claims to our special devotion, as they will be referred to in the tributes which I will now gather from various sources. I have been disappointed in some that I have sought for outside the Catholic Church. Dr. Alexander, who has just resigned the position of Primate in the Episcopal Church in Ireland, has a sequence of three sonnets on St. John at Patmos, from which not a line can profitably be culled; and Sir Francis Turner Palgrave, "At Ephesus," is only slightly more quotable:—

Of those who saw Him, when
On common earth He trod
The life of man with men,
I only, only, breathe,

Who leaned upon His breast and knew that He was God.

.

I, John, can testify,
Alone of living men,
By seeing of the eye,
And hearing of the ear,

That very God as man breathed, died, and rose again.

And then, after many stanzas, too vague, too cold, with too little of St. John in them, the poem ends thus:—

My little children true!
Before these lips are dumb,
They leave this word for you—
"Love one another!" And

Again, "love one another!" Enough—He calls, I come.

Much more satisfactory than Dr. William Alexander is Dr. William Alabaster—though indeed his career is a melancholy one. He had the courage to become a Catholic at a dangerous time, the last years of Queen Elizabeth, yet after fourteen years of hardships at home and wanderings in exile, he relapsed into Protestantism under James I, who gave him a good living and made him a prebendary of St. Paul's. Certain poems of his that have recently been discovered, belong evidently to the Catholic period of his life. It is strange that Father J. H. Pollen, S.J. ("The Month," April, 1904) prints the first lines of Alabaster's sonnet on St. John the Evangelist in the following manner :—

High-towering Eagle I rightly mayst thou feast
Beheld so near to Christ's solemnity.

Surely there is here an obvious misprint to be corrected, as I do in transcribing it. As I quote it for purposes of devotion rather than literary criticism, I will make another slight change to get rid of the phrase "at His sup" :—

High-towering Eagle I rightly may thy feast
Be held so near to Christ's solemnity :
Thou to His Godhead didst aspire so high,
Thou at His Passion by His side wast pressed,
Didst at His Supper lean upon His breast
(Boldness of love, upon His breast to lie !)
And there didst suck of His divinity
Which in thy heavenly Gospel is expressed.
But did Christ suffer such love, passing mean ?
Then, Jesus, blame Thyself, for Thou hast given
A precedent of large presumption,
For I not only on Thy breast will lean
But through Thy breast unto Thy heart will run.
Is that such boldness ? Therefore it was given !

The first line of this sonnet emphasizes a circumstance which struck me independently in an earlier part of this paper, namely, the touching significance of the closeness of St. John's feast to that of his Divine Master; and the last line is a fine condensation of St. Bernard's famous words: *Ad hoc perforatum est cor tuum ut nobis patescat aditus*. "To this end was Thy Heart pierced that an entrance might lie open for us."

We have refrained from quoting Archbishop Alexander's sonnets about St. John as being too cold, too classical, too pagan. His blank verse does not get much closer to the subject, for we have to pass over a page before we come to the "three years, three wondrous years, three silent years" during which St. John was

Silent that he might hear the Saviour speak
Of Light and Love, and the Baptismal Dew,
Water of Life, and Sacramental Bread—
Until at last he stood beside the Cross,
And heard the sweet Bequest that gently gave
The Virgin-Mother to the Virgin Soul—
Two Heavenly Gems in the small coronet
Of one poor home.

Another Anglican, George William Cox, versifies more simply the story that St. Jerome tells us about St. John's last days, when he had to be carried to the church, or what served then for a church, and when he could not preach but used to say to his people over and over again, *Filioli, diligite alterutrum*. "Little children, love one another." And, when they were tired hearing always the same thing, and asked him why he repeated that so often, he answered,

“Because it is the commandment of the Lord, and, if this is done, it is enough”.

Two thousand years have well-nigh passed
Since he, the gentlest and the last
Of all that holy band
That with their Lord and Saviour bore
The weary toil and labour sore,
Led by His guiding Hand,
Hath passed unto his rest away
Where Love can never more decay,
And Faith and Hope are o'er :
All gently closed his eyes in sleep,
E'en while his children round him weep.
That he may stay no more.

And then, when they had “laid him in the hallowed ground,”

They thought upon his last farewell,
How with faint voice he still would dwell
On Love and Love alone—
How while his children all stood near,
Fondly his parting words to hear,
Love breathed in every tone.
And when they asked why that one word,
From him so long, so often heard,
Was all he uttered still,
He said, as faint his accents fall,
That Love, and Love alone, would all
Our Saviour's words fulfil.¹

None of that coldness, vagueness, aloofness that

¹ Mr. Orby Shipley, who, as a Catholic, has enriched our sacred literature with those beautiful and holy anthologies, “Annus Sanctus” and “Carmina Mariana,” published, while he was an Anglican clergyman, three collections of religious verse, “Lyra Eucharistica,” “Lyra Messianica,” and “Lyra Mystica”. The last of these has furnished our samples of Anglican poetry in praise of St. John the Evangelist.

we have complained of hitherto is to be found when we come to the Catholic laureates of the Beloved Disciple. Cardinal Newman may serve us as a link between the two, for he was both within and without. It was twelve years before his conversion that he wrote the lines that will be quoted next. He was hurrying home from Sicily, where he had been seriously ill, but (through God's mercy for many souls) did not die. He spent twenty-seven days at sea between Palermo and Marseilles, from 1 June till 27 June. Probably he had no books with him, and, I think, no companion, and he beguiled the tedium of his solitude by writing verses. Strange to say, he dated them all exactly. Beginning with 1 June, he wrote at least one poem each day except the 7th, 8th, 10th, and 15th; but, to make up superabundantly for these omissions, he wrote two poems on the 19th, 23rd, 25th, and 27th, and three poems on the 18th, 20th, 21st, 22nd and 24th. Of these thirty-seven poems produced in twenty-seven days the most memorable is the one beginning "Lead, Kindly Light," which he called "The Pillar of the Cloud," written on 16 June. On the 22nd he wrote on "James and John":—

Two brothers freely cast their lot
With David's royal Son;
The cost of conquest counting not,
They deem the battle won.

Brothers in heart, they hope to gain
An undivided joy;
That man may one with man remain,
As boy was one with boy.

Christ heard ; and willed that James should fall,
First prey of Satan's rage ;
John linger out his fellows all
And die in bloodless age.

Now they join hands once more above,
Before the Conqueror's throne :
Thus God grants prayer, but in His love
Makes times and ways His own.

The first book that John Henry Newman published as a Catholic, "Discourses to Mixed Congregations," contains some of the noblest things he ever wrote. Richard Holt Hutton of the "Spectator" was quite right in holding that his Catholic writings are far superior to his Anglican writings. One of these Catholic sermons is "Purity and Love," as symbolized respectively in St. John and St. Peter; for these glorious saints are linked here together, as they were so often during the three most momentous years of the world's history. After a magnificent panegyric of St. John the Baptist, the preacher goes on:—

"Yet still more beautiful, and almost as majestic, is the image of his namesake, that great Apostle, Evangelist, and Prophet of the Church, who came so early into our Lord's chosen company and lived so long after all his fellows. We can contemplate him in his youth and in his venerable age; and on his whole life, from first to last, as his special gift, is marked purity. He is the virgin Apostle, who on that account was so dear to his Lord, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' who lay on His Bosom, who received His Mother from Him when upon the cross, who had the vision of all the wonders which were

to come to pass in the world to the end of time. 'Greatly to be honoured,' says the Church, 'is blessed John, who on the Lord's Breast lay at supper, to whom, a virgin, did Christ on the cross commit His Virgin Mother. He was chosen a virgin by the Lord, and was more beloved than the rest. The special prerogative of chastity had made him meet for his Lord's larger love, because, being chosen by Him a virgin, a virgin he remained unto the end.' He it was who in his youth professed his willingness to drink Christ's chalice with Him; who wore away a long life a desolate stranger in a foreign land; who was at length carried to Rome and plunged into the hot oil, and then was banished to a far island, till his days drew near their close."

The incident alluded to in these last words is the theme of a ballad in the "Lyra Sanctorum" by an anonymous writer who says that they who witnessed our Saviour's Crucifixion were themselves to be exempt from the pains of martyrdom. And therefore, when, in the second persecution, in the year of our Lord 95, St. John was plunged into a cauldron of boiling oil at the Latin Gate in Rome, he came out unharmed:—

They have cast him into the bubbling oil,
And they deem their purpose done;
Mounts higher and higher the storm of fire,
But the victory is not won.

"Why did the heathen rage?" God's power
Hath quelled the burning lake:
He who could save in the lion's cave
His own will not forsake.

"Why did the heathen rage?" The Saint
Had seen his Saviour die;
Therefore was he for ever free
From Martyr's agony.

The bloodless Martyr exiled goes
Where sea-girt Patmos lies:
The Lord commands, strong angel hands
Unveil heaven's mysteries.

The last stanza alludes, of course, to the Apocalypse. Whatever else that mysterious book may reveal, it reveals the greatness of St. John's soul and the tenderness of his heart: for all these sublime visions end with the yearning cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

And now we come to those who, like St. John himself, have taken the Mother of Jesus for their own, who follow up the "Our Father" with the "Hail Mary". Two of these indeed had to make their way into the Church of the Ave Maria. As Father Faber is known to all, I will quote only five out of twelve stanzas and print four lines as two:—

Sweet Saint of the Sacred Heart, sweet Teacher of the Word,
Partner of Mary's woes, and favourite of thy Lord!

Thou to whom grace was given to stand where Peter fell,
Whose heart could brook the Cross of Him it loved so well.

We know not all thy gifts; but this Christ bids us see
That He who so loved all found more to love in thee.

When the last evening came, thy head was on His breast,
Pillowed on earth where now in Heaven the saints find rest.

And then after many tender words the poet claims to share with St. John those supreme gifts of Jesus—His Mother and His Heart:—

Ah, teach me then, dear Saint, the secrets Christ taught thee,
The beatings of His heart, and how it beat for me.

The other convert was not very widely known, even in his lifetime, though many revered him as a singularly holy man, Father Henry A. Rawes, an Oblate of St. Charles in London. His very devout little treatise, "Sursum, or Sparks flying Upwards," is dedicated to St. John the Evangelist who has also a chapter to himself. The saints who were nearest to the Blessed Virgin have a special attractiveness, he says, and he claims this above all for St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, and St. John. Joseph seems to him to be a created shadow of the Eternal Father, Gabriel of the Holy Ghost, John of God the Son. "He lay upon the Sacred Heart when the darkness and agony of the Passion were gathering thickly round it; and he is emphatically canonized by the Holy Ghost as the 'disciple whom Jesus loved'. He was with Mary during the Passion. Through the long agony of that night Mary was not with Jesus. . . . All through that night, when joy was turned into bitterness and the very light seemed to be darkness, John went backwards and forwards from Jesus to Mary, and from Mary to Jesus, with his tidings of sorrow. He stood with Mary beside the Cross. God, looking upon the millions of men, and searching their hearts, chose him from amongst them all to be with that heartbroken, desolate Mother when the height and depth of her grief were most unsearchable. He had need of the strong, bright gaze of his eagle vision if he desired to see even a little way into that sea of sorrow and agony on whose shore he stood."

This last phrase refers to that inspired word, "Great as the sea is thy broken-heartedness, O Virgin

Daughter of Sion". Farther on, Father Rawes makes a striking choice of saints to illustrate the greatness of St. John's love for the Blessed Virgin. "Great was the love of Mary which filled the large hearts of men like Innocent the Third or St. Ildephonsus or St. Bernardine of Sienna or St. Francis of Assisi or St. Dominic or St. Ignatius or St. Philip Neri or St. Stanislaus Kostka or St. Charles; but their love for her was not like the love of St. John. And through the ages the love of Mary will grow deeper and stronger in the heart of the Church; but there will be no love in greatness and strength like his."

The second part of Father Rawes' book is a long poem in blank verse, of which "Mary" is the name and the theme.¹ Out of the twelve Apostles the only ones described separately are "the first and greatest of the Popes," then "mighty Paul, the Gentile world's untired Evangelist," and then St. John:—

High on his throne in Apostolic Choir
The Virgin Prophet of the Bridegroom's Church,
Crowned with his triple coronet of light,
Is John who leaned upon the Breast of God,
Steeped in the sweet, strong flood of love that flowed
From secret fountains of that Sacred Heart
Which throbbed against his own.

Another tribute in that perilous metre, blank verse, has been paid to our Saint by Margaret Ryan, who is better known to many by a name not her own, Alice Esmonde. She confines herself to the relations between our Lady and St. John. As it is not included

¹ He devotes a separate book to a Life of St. John.

in her volume, "Songs of Remembrance," I give it in full :—

John was the youngest of the chosen Twelve,
The tenderest ever and the most beloved,
And he had leaned upon his Master's breast
Within the supper room, that last sad eve.
Yet was he strong, noble, and great of heart,
Pre-eminently fitted and ordained
For any trust, most sacred, or most high,
As knew the Searcher of all hearts; and hence
'Midst pain most fierce, in His supremest hour,
Forsaken of His Father and of man,
He spake, " Behold thy son ! Thy Mother, John ! "
Ah ! me, John hears, and understands too well
The poor attempt that he, or one of those
Whom Jesus loved and called to walk with Him,
May make to comfort her, all desolate,
Nor spared in aught,

Beneath the cross she stood—
As Christ the King, so Queen of martyrs she ;
And easier for her, or wounds, or death,
That men or demons might in hate devise,
Borne in His stead.

Upon a summer's eve
They gently led her to the house of John,
And, bowing down her patient heart, she goes
How patiently ! while still she seems to hear
His moans, as swooning 'neath the lash He falls,
Her Son, her only one, her snow-white Lamb,
Before His cruel shearers white and dumb.
Invisible Angels guard her as she moves,
Fearful lest aught with evil wing dare hurt
The Mother of their God. As Gabriel's
Their salutation " Hail ! thou, full of grace ".
And, as she enters the poor home of John,
A perfume fills the air, as of strange flowers,
Grown and distilled in fields of Paradise ;
John kneels in reverent welcome at her feet,
And humbly kissing her blue robe's low hem

Her blessing craves ; scarce can he see with eyes
Sore blinded from the constant, burning tears
For the good Master gone, her gentlest Son,
And now—O wondrous and most fearful trust,
And of the Cross most precious legacy!—
The childless Mother comes to claim a child,
His roof to give her shelter, and his hands
Food, raiment, and all dutious filial care.
With awe and anxious thought, John sees her move
Each day amidst her humble, household tasks,
Or spread the simple meal, or at the loom
Weaving for him the garments he may wear
In Patmos by the sea, when she is gone.
She sighs full oft, asking (how tremulously!)
Of Peter and of James, and of the dear
Beloved ones, who spend their lives for love
Of Jesus, and the souls whom Jesus loves.
And ever when John comes or goes, he kneels,
And Peter kneels likewise, and James, and all
Of the Apostles kneel, that she may bless
Their work and them.

The martyr's palm she sees
Mayhap, within each sun-browed hand ; she prays
For each in his lone hour of martyrdom
Beneath strange skies, from Palestine afar.
In sanctity and grace how groweth John,
In gentlest reverence too, in zeal and hope !
To Mary Jesus owes His human Heart,
With all its dread capacity for love.
She knew that Heart the best—its tenderness,
Its changeless pity, its forbearance sweet.
Better than Saint, or fond Evangelist,
Better than martyrs and apostles all,
The secrets of the Son, the Mother knew.
Thus taught of her, Saint John, her second son,
As first and last of laws preached charity,
Man's love for man, grown perfect through Christ's love,
Whose love was unto death, Who burst death's bonds,
And then, returning to His Heaven, prepared
For us a home of joys unspeakable.

Father John Morris, S.J., was one of the holiest and most learned of the converts who, in the second half of the nineteenth century, made such valuable additions to English Catholic literature. His historical writings are of the highest merit; and it was a great misfortune that he did not live to write the biography of Cardinal Wiseman—a task with which he was the first to be entrusted as having been, before he became a Jesuit, most closely connected with the first Archbishop of Westminster. The thoroughness and the earnestness with which Father Morris applied himself to every duty, great and small, are exemplified in the notes of his own private retreats that he took perseveringly through a long course of years. I turn to them only as a proof of his devotion to his namesake, St. John. During the Long Retreat of his Noviceship, he is meditating on Jesus carrying His Cross. "Help me, my own St. John! See, that dear shoulder on which so lately thou didst lean is bleeding from the wound the heavy cross has made. And thou canst not help Him save by being a son to His Blessed Mother. Take me with thee and teach me, dear St. John." The next day he prays: "Let me love Thee, O Sacred Heart, with the love of Thy Mother and of St. John and St. Mary Magdalen". And he ends another prayer for "constant mortification of my senses and incessant humiliation" by appealing to his namesake, "Sweet St. John, be my true patron here".

Father Edward Caswall of the Oratory, who perhaps did a greater service for the Church by his fine translations than his more brilliant brother,

Father Faber, by his original hymns, has two for the feast of St. John the Evangelist, translated from the Latin but not from the Roman Breviary. The first begins by contrasting the first three Gospels with that of St. John, who soars to such ethereal heights in his very first words: *In principio erat Verbum*.

The life which God's Incarnate Word
 Lived here below with men,
 Three blest Evangelists record
 With Heav'n-inspired pen:
 John penetrates on eagle wing
 The Father's dread abode;
 And shews the mystery wherein
 The Word subsists with God.
 Pure Saint! upon his Saviour's breast
 Invited to recline,
 'Twas thence he drew, in moments blest,
 His knowledge all divine:
 There, too, with that angelic love
 Did he his bosom fill,
 Which, once enkindled from above,
 Breathes in his pages still.
 Oh, dear to Christ!—to thee upon
 His Cross, of all bereft,
 Thou virgin soul! the Virgin Son
 His Virgin Mother left.
 To Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
 Praise with the Father be;
 Praise to the Spirit Paraclete,
 Through all eternity.

The second hymn dwells on the visions of the Apocalypse:—

An exile for the Faith
 Of thy Incarnate Lord,
 Beyond the stars,—beyond all space,
 Thy soul imprison'd soar'd:

AMONG THE BLESSED

There saw in glory Him
 Who liveth, and was dead :
 There Juda's Lion, and the Lamb
 That for our ransom bled :

There of the Kingdom learnt
 The mysteries sublime,
 How, sown in Martyr's blood, the Faith
 Should spread from clime to clime.

There the new City, bathed
 In her dear Spouse's light,
 Pure seat of bliss, thy spirit saw,
 And gloried in the sight.

Now to the Lamb's clear fount,
 To drink of life their fill,
 Thou callest all :—O Lord, in me
 This blessed thirst instil.

To Jesus, Virgin-born,
 Praise with the Father be ;
 Praise to the Spirit Paraclete,
 Through all eternity.

In Father Fitzpatrick's dainty little volume, "Virgo Praedicanda," there is a sonnet "In the House of John," but our Saint has no share in it except that name. Not so with two sonnets in "Songs of Sion," by Sister Mary Stanislaus, O.S.D., the holy and gifted daughter of our sweet Irish poet, Denis Florence MacCarthy.

O John, thy Master's dearest earthly friend,
 How wise wert thou to raise thy heart so high,
 To let all fleeting human love go by
 And make thine own what ne'er could change or end.
 Ah ! scarcely can thy pitying love descend
 Where our poor hopes and cherished fancies die :
 Ne'er didst thou see thy trust in ruins lie

Nor cruel truth thy fair delusions rend.
 No cloud of doubt thy loving eyes could dim,
 No fear thy love was burdensome to Him—
 See with what trust thou leanedst on His breast!
 No thought—"Perchance He wishes me away,"
 No fear—"And am I worthy here to stay?"
 No doubt He loved thee more than all the rest.

But He thy Master, was He not in this,
 As in all else, more like to us and near?
 How oft His loved ones, even Thou most dear,
 Pained His kind heart and took His love amiss?
 Was not the traitor's chosen sign a kiss?
 And in the garden's lonely vigil drear
 Did He not ask His dearest friends for cheer,
 And find them slumbering, careless, and remiss?
 Misunderstandings, disappointments chill,
 Coolness, unkindness,—He has felt them all;
 Who knows their bitter pain so well as He?
 Oh! then, His heart must be our comfort still:
 On Him for pity more secure we call
 Than e'en on thee, dear Saint of Charity!

Nothing vague or cold in these lines, as in Christina Rossetti's, in whom I find nothing that I can quote, though she alludes more than once to St. John. Very different is the glowing tribute paid by Rosa Mulholland to St. John the Beloved:—

Who leaned upon the Master's breast
 In rest,
 Who stood
 Beneath the gory rood.

Who writ the code of Love's desire
 In fire,
 Each word
 The trumpet of thy Lord.

AMONG THE BLESSED

Belovèd of the Holy One,
 The son
 To whom
 The Mother did come home.

 Poet and priest of Patmos, be
 For me
 A voice
 Where seraphim rejoice ;

 And in thy loving Master's ear
 My fear
 Speak low,
 And whisper of my woe.

 And all my fields of love make known
 O'ergrown
 With tares
 Of silences and cares.

 Befriend thy namesake,¹ to him prove
 The love
 Thy word
 Hath counselled in the Lord.

 And with him share thy heritage,
 Love's wage ;
 O son
 Of Mary, blessed John !

I think it is Richard Crashaw whom Abraham Cowley apostrophizes as poet and saint. One of his "Epigrammata Sacra" is about the petition addressed to our Blessed Lord by the mother of James and John, that her sons might sit, one on His right hand, the other on His left. The convert Canon of Loretto supposes John to rebuke his mother for making such a request.

¹ Her husband, Sir John Gilbert, the learned Irish historian. May he rest in peace.

O mihi cur dextram, mater, cur, oro, sinistram
Poscis, ab officio mater iniqua tuo?
Nolo manum Christi dextram mihi, nolo sinistram;
Tam procul a sacro non libet esse sinu.

Why askest thou, O mother!
Right hand or left for me?
So far from Jesus' bosom
I could not bear to be.

Aubrey de Vere also was a saint as well as a poet, and the most saintly of his poems is "May Carols". He alludes to St. John twice only—once where he attributes to St. Bernard "a maiden face like John's," and again where he translates the "Ecce Mater tua" that we have repeated so often:—

"Behold thy Mother!" From the Cross
He gave her—not to one alone.
We are His brethren; unto us
He gave a mother as to John.
Behold the greatest gift of Christ,
Save that wherein Himself He gives,
The wonder-working Eucharist,
Sole life of each that truly lives.

Yes, our Divine Redeemer bequeathed two supreme gifts to His Church—His Blessed Mother and His own most precious Body and Blood. Both of these legacies He reserved to the very last; and in the giving of both St. John was singularly concerned. He does not record in his Gospel the actual institution of the Blessed Eucharist; for that had been done already by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke; and it is to supply the omissions of these three first evangelists that St. John chiefly addresses himself. Nay, St. Paul also was beforehand with him, and with regard to this dogma (and this dogma alone)

the thirteenth Apostle had, as one might say, usurped the function of our Evangelist and in his Epistle to the Corinthians described the First Mass with an exactness and an emphasis which prove the primary place it holds in the new Christian dispensation. St. John's Gospel not only comes after all these, but it comes last in his life. The yearning cry "Come, Lord Jesus!" which brings the Apocalypse to an end, was uttered long before the sublime words which begin the last of the Four Gospels and which we call the last Gospel of the Mass. But if St. John is not the historian of the Blessed Eucharist, he is its theologian and doctor; for through him alone we know the outpouring of the Sacred Heart at the Last Supper; and in the sixth chapter of his Gospel the promise is recorded which was there fulfilled, and the nature and effects of the eucharistic union are expounded, followed, alas! by the first insolent protest of heresy and unbelief.

St. John was, with St. Andrew, the first of the Apostles spoken to by his Divine Master, when He turned round and said to the two disciples of the Baptist, "Whom seek you?" St. John also, and this time St. John alone, is the last to be addressed by Jesus. "Son, behold thy Mother!"

These words were spoken to you from the Cross, O dear and glorious Saint! Our Divine Redeemer was then dying for our sake. In a few moments He was to breathe His last breath and leave this mortal life for ever; and in those last moments He bequeathed His Blessed Mother to your care. But you, dear Saint, represented us all in that solemn

scene, and Mary was given to us also as our Mother. To each of us our Lord says still, "Behold your Mother". Oh, may it be said of us as of you: "And from that hour the disciple took her as his own". Let us take her as our own. Let us look up to her as a mother, confide in her, love her, fly to her in all our troubles, try to please her in every way that we can, try to avoid all that displeases her, and to live in the manner that befits the children of such a Mother. Help us, O sweet Apostle of Love, to feel as you felt towards the Mother of Jesus after Jesus had said to you with His dying breath, "Behold thy Mother!"

ST. CHRISTOPHER.

(JULY 25.)

[THIRD CENTURY.]

ST. CHRISTOPHER might put forward strong claims to the distinction of being the favourite saint of the poets. His most formidable rival would perhaps be St. Agnes. Tennyson and even Keats, seemingly without any particular reason except the very poetry of her name, have named two of the most poetical of their poems after the Eve of St. Agnes. It would be easy for us to collect¹ a rather large anthology of poems in praise of St. Emerentiana's foster-sister, besides much glowing prose inspired by her story from St. Ambrose to Cardinal Wiseman. But still both poets and painters have, we believe, done much more for the saint whom we are going to place before our readers *cum notis variorum*, as the ancient classics used to be issued—that is, with comments compiled from various writers and given in the words of those writers.

But the text itself must first be given in full before the comments begin. The popular legend of St. Christopher has been told in prose by the poet Longfellow in “Kavanagh,” the sweetest and pleasantest

¹ We have done so in the present volume.



Dierick Bouts, pinxit]

ST. CHRISTOPHER

of all his works, except "Evangeline". But it has been told better and more fully by Rosa Mulholland. Those who possess that daintiest of fairy tales, "Puck and Blossom," will find the story of St. Christopher told about the hundredth page by "the Boy who lived up on the Dom". But the same pen had written out the legend somewhat earlier in a slightly different form, which in certain parts suits our present purpose best. We shall therefore skip sometimes from one version to the other, but the narrator shall still be the author of "Marcella Grace".

I will tell you the story of the mighty St. Christopher, who is too little known in our country. When travelling in foreign lands, many of us are greatly surprised to see a giant with a benevolent face, and a little child perched on his shoulder, looking down on us from pillars and nooks of the great cathedrals. Sometimes he is made of stone, standing under the light of some jewelled window; a huge man leaning on a club, rough and bearded, with face upturned to the gaze of the infant, who peers into his eyes with a tender and mystical smile. He is also to be found in rare old pictures, struggling through heavy waters in a dim twilight, only lighted on his way by the radiance of the little face above his shoulder. I have met him where rude, but loving, hands had made a coarse image of him on the corner of a street, or over some humble doorway. On a corner-stone of the quaint old German town of Trier I found him striding along through grass-green waves, and dressed out in all the colours of the rain-

bow. Close by stood the Roman gates, black and grim with age, and streaked with tawny stains, like rust, but the golden acacias clustering with warm bloom about their sides. The hot sun shone on the frowning arches of the gates, and on the grotesque image of St. Christopher; on the monument of the past, which had remained through so many ages, and the picture sprung from a legend which had lived almost as long in the people's hearts. At such a time I should have been sorry not to know the story of the giant, the good and mighty Christopher, who carried the Lord of the world upon his shoulders.

He lived in very old times, belonged to the land of Canaan, and his name was Offero. People feared and wondered at him because he was such a giant, and he grew so proud of his strength that he would serve no master but the greatest King that lived. And he set out to seek for the kingdom of the greatest King.

After travelling a long, long way, he arrived at last at the gates of a palace, which he was told belonged to the greatest King on earth; and he knocked upon the gates with a great loud knock, which startled the King and his friends who were sitting at supper.

The servants were greatly astonished when they opened the gates and saw the visitor.

"Tell your master," said Christopher, "that Offero, the giant, has come to serve him."

The King was delighted on hearing this, and invited his new retainer to sit beside him at supper. In the course of the conversation, somebody chanced to mention the name of Satan, when the King immediately crossed himself,

"Why do you do that?" asked Offero.

"Because I am afraid of Satan," said the King.

"What!" cried Offero. "*You* are afraid of Satan. I shall go and find this Satan then; and him will I serve, since he is greater than you."

And off he went into the night alone. He travelled through storm and cold, across dark forests and desolate mountains; and, just as the dawn broke, he was crossing a bleak waste, when he saw a strange, dark-looking figure coming to meet him out of the shadows.

"Where are you going, fellow-traveller?" asked this person.

"I am seeking for one Satan," replied Offero, "for he is greater than the greatest King on earth. My strength is mighty, and I will only serve the most powerful monarch that is to be found."

"We are well met, then," said the stranger, "for I am Satan, and I will take you into my service on the spot."

Offero was delighted, and they travelled on together, till, after a long way, they came to where four roads met and formed a cross.

When Satan saw this, he shrank and trembled. "We must turn back," he said.

"Why?" said Offero.

"Because," said Satan, "I dare not pass the cross."

"Why?" said Offero again.

"Because of Jesus Christ," said Satan, very unwillingly. "The Cross is His sign, and I am afraid."

"What! are you a coward too?" cried Offero,

"Then you are not the greatest King, after all! I will go and seek for Jesus Christ, and Him only will I serve."

So he said good-bye to Satan, and went travelling still farther in search of Christ.

He asked a great many people to show him the way to Christ's Kingdom, but nobody could tell him; for this happened a long time ago, when there were very few Christians in the world. Poor Offero was quite disheartened; he wandered east and west, and north and south, in vain; and it seemed to him that all his great strength was good for nothing, since he could not devote it to the service of the greatest King.

At last, one evening, he met an old grey hermit, in a very lonely spot, and asked him the usual question.

"Oh, old man, can you show me the way to the Kingdom of Christ?"

"That I can," said the old man gently, and with great surprise; and he invited the giant to rest in his cave, and there he explained to him that the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world; yet, that a man may do magnificent service, while on earth, for this mightiest of Kings.

"But it is a difficult service," said the hermit. "You must fast."

"I could not fast," said Offero, "for my strength is my only possession; and were I to fast it would melt away."

"You must pray," said the hermit.

"I do not know how to pray," said Offero.

"Well, then," said the hermit, "if you can neither fast nor pray, I will tell you what you can do for

Jesus Christ"; and he led Offero out again, and showed him a place where a great river rushed down between the rocks with a terrible current, and where almost every day numbers of people were drowned in trying to cross the stream, when they were obliged to go on journeys.

"Here," he said, "you may serve the Lord by using your great strength to carry the poor people through the torrent. If you are a true servant of God, you will not weary of the task."

Offero obeyed joyfully. He built himself a hut beside the waters, and when anyone came to cross the stream, he called aloud for Offero. The giant rooted up a young palm-tree to serve him as a club, and leaning on this he waded bravely day after day, and night after night, through the terrible waves; thus saving the lives of hundreds of his fellow-creatures. And whenever he felt weary, he thought of his great Master, and was patient.

One night, when asleep in his hut, he heard the voice of a little child crying out to him in the storm:—

"Offero, Offero! come out and carry me across!"

He got up and went out, but could see nothing. He had hardly lain down again, when he heard the same little helpless voice crying out to him again. Once more he went out and searched, and made up his mind he must have been dreaming; when, louder and clearer than ever, the voice wailed forth again:—

"Oh, Offero, Offero! come forth and carry me across the flood this night!"

And going out a third time, there he found a tiny

child standing shivering alone upon the rock above the tide.

Offero was greatly surprised, as you may imagine, at seeing a young child out alone in such a place on such a night ; but he said nothing, only lifted the little creature on his shoulders, and waded out as usual into the water. But no sooner had he got about half-way across the stream, than he felt that he was carrying the most terrible load that ever pressed upon his shoulders. He staggered under it, and almost lost his senses, and it was only by the greatest effort that he was able to keep his feet, and arrive safely at the opposite bank with his burden. Then he placed the strange infant on his feet on the rock, and looked at him in amazement.

“Who art thou, O child! that has been able to place me in such peril? Had I carried the whole world, the burden had not been heavier.”

The child replied, “Wonder not, O Christopher! for thou hast borne not the world only, but Him who made the world, upon thy shoulders. Thou hast bravely striven to serve Me, and I have sought thee here that thou mayst yet do greater things for Me. In token that I speak to thee truly, plant thy staff in the earth, and it shall put forth blossoms and fruit in thy sight.” Christopher did as he was desired, and immediately leaves covered the dry staff, flowers sprang among the leaves, and clusters of dates hung ripely down from its branches. When Christopher could remove his eyes from this wonderful sight, he found that the child had vanished.

Then the strong man knew that the Lord had

come out of heaven to call him into his service, addressing him not as Offero, but Christopher, "bearer of Christ". He fell down on his face, and worshipped the Saviour of the world.

After this he left his hut beside the torrent, and went out into the world to teach and preach the Saviour crucified. He made converts everywhere, and stood by many martyrs, consoling and strengthening them in their last struggle for God. He spent many years, bringing souls to the Kingdom of Christ, and spreading the love of the Saviour of men; and in the end he had the glory of dying for God, and went to heaven to receive his reward.

This is the legend of St. Christopher, and in countries where it is known, people call upon him to carry them through the waters of their affliction. They believe that the very sight of his image gives them strength, and so they love to have it in their churches, and over their doors, and out in their streets. Let us, too, call upon him for help, and let us also try to imitate him in using whatever little faculty we may be possessed of for the greater glory of God!

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In the foregoing account Lady Gilbert follows Mrs. Jameson ("Sacred and Legendary Art," Vol. II, p. 439), in making Offero the giant's first name; but this would seem to be a mistake arising from *Christofero*, the Italian form of Christopher ("carrying Christ").¹ In a version of the legend written by William Manning in respectable but not inspired

¹ "Chambers's Encyclopædia" says his original name was Adokimos (the Unrighteous).

blank verse (published by Burns & Oates in 1883), "Arprobus" is given, and probably invented, as the pagan name of the Saint.

And here we may give a paragraph to the bibliography of our subject. We have already referred to four places where St. Christopher is discussed. Another metrical version of his legend is by a Miss Mary Shipley (published by William Poole, 12A Paternoster Row, London). A spirited poem on the same theme by F. M. Doherty, will be found in "Good Words" (Vol. XIV, p. 240); and verses not so good by the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman" (Dinah Mulock Craik), in "St. James's Magazine" (Vol. I, p. 59). Mrs. Craik is as little of a poet as Lady Georgiana Fullerton, though both are excellent story-tellers. Other references are furnished to American magazines by that wonderful book, "Poole's Index to Periodical Literature": namely, "Hours at Home" (Vol. V, p. 231), "The Lakeside Monthly" (Vol. IX, p. 49), and "The Catholic World" (Vol. XVII). Mr. Lewis Morris devotes one of his "Songs Unsung" to St. Christopher; and, best perhaps of all, Mr. B. Montgomery Ranking. To this list of poets we may add Sister Mary Stanislaus MacCarthy, O.S.D., who for a private occasion wrote the following lines hitherto unpublished:—

We keep the feast of a helpful Saint,
Of a Saint with a ready hand,
A Saint who felt a neighbour's plaint
More than his heart could stand.
That heart with Jesus' love aglow
Kept dwelling on the word:—

“ By what you do for *them* I'll know
Your love for Me, your Lord ”.
He felt he *must* aid his fellow-men,
But the way was not so sure :
He could not preach, nor wield the pen,
Nor tend Christ's suffering poor.
His will was strong, but his gifts were few,
Yet his heart was not cast down—
A lowly work he found to do,
And it won him his deathless crown.
One gift he had—the gift of strength—
A gift too oft abused—
And he saw a humble way at length
In which it might be used.
We've heard the legend o'er and o'er,
We've seen in pictured guise
The troubled stream where, shore to shore,
The Saint his mission plies :
Across the rushing waters wild
With steady step and sure,
He bears the old man and the child,
The weak, the maimed, the poor.
No matter who or when they came,
His strength for all sufficed,
And there he won his glorious name
“ The carrier of Christ ”.

Another of these *varii* whose *notæ* I wish to press into the service of St. Christopher is John Ruskin. No doubt he has referred to him in other parts of his writings ; but this reference occurs in a chapter contributed to Miss Alexander's “ Roadside Songs of Tuscany ”.

“ I do not know,” he says, “ how far the tale of St. Christopher is proposed by the Catholic Church for belief as history, or with interpretation as myth. I could myself much more easily explain it as the gradually enriched and sunset-gilded tradition of a

dream and vision seen by a hermit-ferryman, than I can interpret its incidents as symbolizing any course of facts of spiritual life. Reading it as a myth, I am myself utterly uncertain of the meaning of the King, the hermit, the river, or the oppression felt by the saint in bearing Him whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light. But I will hope for the reader's pleasure in being reminded of Tintoret's figure of St. Christopher in Paradise (in the Ducal Palace at Venice), bearing the globe of the world, which is surmounted by a cross, and by whose surface a beam of light descending from the enthroned Christ is reflected in a dazzling star. By which I have always understood Tintoret to mean what Holman Hunt meant by his 'Light of the World,' but with the further lesson that the visitation which was to sanctify our world for us with eternal day would come first through the deepest night, and in the heaviest toil of the occupation which was our earthly duty. I think also that Tintoret may have intended to make us feel how greatly the story of St. Christopher had been itself a light to all the Christian, and might be to all the future world. But none of these lessons by great imaginative interpreters, however probable, guides us to any clear reading of the legend for all men, in the continuous action of it; nor, if any such could be given, would the application be other than forced and untrustworthy. At first thought most of us would suppose the river meant human life; but that river we do not cross, but descend: we are troubled when it is troubled, calm when it is calm. We do not resist its current nor refuse its peace. Again, in

memory of more recent fables, we might think of it as the river of death ; but the travellers whom the saint carried over resumed their journey, and he himself, finally fording it, begins his true ministry of the Gospel. Take it for some chief time of trouble, and we might, perhaps, without much strain suppose the meaning to be that the man who had sustained others in their chief earthly trials afterwards had Christ for companion in his own ; but this idea would never occur easily and naturally to very simple persons who heard the story ; it is rare that among the many confused evils of existence any of us can fix on that which, once traversed, was to be feared no more ; and I should be extremely reluctant to offer to my Protestant readers, as the true sense of the loveliest of Catholic legends, the thought that common people were only to have a saint to comfort them in their troubles, while the saint himself had Christ. More and more, as I think over it, I am led to take it for the memory of what really once happened to some kindly warden of a river ford, bearing by the grace of natural human feeling comfort afterwards to all who hear of it for ever."

The legend as put down by Miss Alexander goes on to relate how the dry fir-tree that St. Christopher carried in his hand became green, after his ministry, and was covered with fresh leaves. Mr. Ruskin compares with this the blossoming of the spears of Charlemagne's knights in the windows of Chartres Cathedral, and adds: "It is, I suppose, only by the coincidence of thought which runs through all great literature and legend that the putting forth of blossom

by the rod of Aaron, and of leaf by the staff of St. Christopher, teaches the life and beneficence of the sceptres of the just, as the for ever leafless sceptre of Achilles, and the spear whose image was the pine, hewn for ships of battle from the Norwegian hills, show in their own death the power of the King of Death”.

At the beginning of this extract Mr. Ruskin expresses a doubt as to the degree in which fanciful legend and authentic history mingle in our account of St. Christopher. Alban Butler and the Bollandists may be regarded as authorities, and they certainly do not put a severe strain on our *pia credulitas*. In Butler’s “Lives of the Saints”—and shame on the Catholic family that has not a copy of that great work—half a column is devoted to St. Christopher on 25th July. We may be sure that he gives us the pith of all the minute and laborious investigations of Father Pinus, S.J., to whom he refers us at the same date in the renowned “Acta Sanctorum”; and it only comes to this that St. Christopher suffered martyrdom in Lycia (and even that circumstance Pinus qualifies by *forte*), in the time of the Emperor Decius. “He seems to have taken the name of Christopher,” says Butler, “upon the like motive that the first St. Ignatius would be called Theophorus, to express his ardent love for his Redeemer by which he always carried Him in his breast as his great and only good, and the only object of all his affections and desires.” The enormous statues of St. Christopher, still to be seen in many Gothic cathedrals, the cautious Englishman takes to be allegorical of his wading through

the sea of the tribulations of this life ; and he quotes with approval the couplet of the poet-bishop, Vida :—

*Christophore, infixum quod eum usque in corde gerebas,
Pictores Christum dant tibi ferre humeris.*

Well has thy image, Christopher, thy sanctity expressed,
Upon thy shoulders bearing Him thou borest in thy breast.

ST. AGNES.

(JANUARY 21.)

[A.D. 290-303.]

THIS is an age of anthologies. An interesting addition might be made to these innumerable collections if one could gather into a single volume the tributes which poets have paid to the saints. From the time of Father Robert Southwell and before it beautiful things have been written about St. Peter, St. Magdalen, St. Patrick, St. Joseph, and hundreds of others. Who would fare best in this tournament of the Muses? Not St. Barbara nor St. Cecilia nor even St. Christopher,¹ but, I think, St. Agnes.

A client of St. Agnes, who glories in her name, and in the tender glory that clings around it, expressed wonder, nevertheless, at the fascination she has always exercised. There is so little of her!—only an exquisitely pure and serene little virgin-martyr, fifteen centuries ago, about half as old as St. Aloysius. Indeed, Agnes is one of those saints whose dignity is rather to be estimated according to the traditional instincts of Catholic devotion than by any analysis of work done, or of gifts and graces possessed.

¹ Many tributes to this saint are collected in the preceding pages.

In the preface to "Fabiola" Cardinal Wiseman gives the following as the general impression of St. Agnes's career, implied, rather than described, in her office in the Roman Breviary:—

"She is evidently pursued by some heathen admirer, whose suit for her hand she repeatedly rejects. Sometimes she tells him that he is forestalled by another, to whom she is betrothed. Sometimes she describes this object of her choice under various images, representing him even as the object of homage to the sun and moon. On another occasion, she describes the rich gifts, or the beautiful garlands, with which he has adorned her. Then, at last, as if more importunately pressed, she rejects the love of perishable man, 'the food of death,' and triumphantly proclaims herself the spouse of Christ. Threats are used; but she declares herself under the protection of an angel who will shield her. It is clearly represented to us that the Saint had ever before her the unseen object of her love—saw Him, heard Him, felt Him, entertained, and had returned, a real affection, such as hearts on earth have for one another. She seems to walk in perpetual vision, almost in ecstatic fruition, of her Spouse's presence. He has actually put a ring upon her finger, has transferred the blood from His own cheeks to hers, has crowned her with budding roses. Her eye is really upon Him, with unerring gaze, and returned looks of gracious love."

The book, of which this is the preface, is, perhaps, the noblest tribute paid in any language to the saint whose memory, as St. Jerome already said so long

ago, is "made famous by the pens and tongues of all nations, especially in the Churches". And, on the other hand, "Fabiola" has done more for the fame of Cardinal Wiseman, at home and abroad, than the most learned of his serious works.

Romance had not with her to invent or idealize; but its difficulty was to rise to the rare and exquisite poetry of this ethereal life which, in its very briefness, was, as the Church says of it, "senectus mentis immensa". Poetry itself is languid and colourless beside the meek radiance of such a soul, whose mere name alone has been as an inspiration to poets, for whom she is a mere name. Keats's daintiest is the "Eve of St. Agnes"; and Lord Tennyson gives the same name to a poem, which refers to no incidents that are recorded of our saint—snowy, Agnesian, pure even to freezing point, yet dreamy, unreal, unattractive, and not at all the Agnes of St. Ambrose, of the "Acta Sanctorum," of the "Golden Legend," of "Fabiola," of Christian history and tradition.

Few Catholic poets who have written of the saints of God have forgotten St. Agnes. One of the shortest and simplest of these tributes is to be found in "Voices from the Heart," the sacred poems of Ellen Downing of Cork (known to some as "Mary" of the "Nation," and to others as Sister Mary Alphonsus), which the saintly Bishop of Down, John Pius Leahy, O.P., edited.

Her cheek was not a shade more pale,
She wore no look of pride;
She gently drew the amber veil
Of her long hair aside.

No stern defiance taught her eye
To smile upon the glaive ;
She simply felt it sweet to die
And meant not to be brave.

She scarcely seemed the angry eyes
Of her stern judge to see ;
She scarcely heard the muttered cries
Reversing his decree.

She scarcely felt the lightning stroke
Which hurled her on the sod ;
'Twas a short dream from which she woke
To her embracing God.

Her love had been a virgin love,
Her brow a virgin brow,
And virgins twine her wreath above,
And seek her shrine below.

Death found her in her bridal dress,
And heard her bridal vows ;
She passed in bridal tenderness
To her eternal Spouse.

I will next venture to give some lines of my own on this subject. The metre of "Hiawatha" is measured here into stanzas by the recurrence of the one sweet name.

Once there was a little maiden,
Bright with thirteen southern summers ;
Beautiful, and gay, and holy,
And the maiden's name was Agnes.

Fair of soul and fair of forehead,
Meek as snow-white, tender lambkin :
Sunny as the skies above her,
And as pure and speckless—Agnes.

Long ago, in world still heathen,
Sprang that flower and blossomed sweetly ;
And the eyes that saw her loved her—
Many sought the love of Agnes.

AMONG THE BLESSED

But the child hath heard of Jesus,
Virgin Son of Virgin Mother ;
Her young soul is wedded to Him,
Earthly love is nought for Agnes.

He from Heaven smiles on her fondly,
Yearns to draw her nearer, nearer,
Rarest flower of all His garden,
Gleams the modest snow-drop, Agnes.

Will she, yearning as He yearneth,
Like the snow-drop, melt serenely ?
Ah ! not thus died He who loves her—
Death, a hero's death, for Agnes.

For that maiden was a Roman—
In her weakness, strongest, bravest ;
Virgin's truth and martyr's courage
Nerve the gentle, fawn-like Agnes.

Firm she stands before the tempter,
'Neath the tyrant's frown she pales not ;
For she sees but Him who loves her,
Hears Him calling, " Come, O Agnes ! "

Near the throne of Him who loves her,
Crowned with red rose and white lily,
Shines the little martyr-maiden :—
Pray for us, ah ! dear St. Agnes.

Henry Rawes, Oblate of St. Charles, was a singularly holy priest, and his holiness lent to his writings a poetic fervour which almost atoned for the deficiency of inspiration. One of his pious poems is a joint tribute to St. Agnes and St. Aloysius ; and somehow these two often come together in one's thoughts. There is a certain similarity between the positions occupied respectively by the sainted maiden and the sainted youth with regard to the young people of their sex. Their feast falls on the same day of the month—

21 January and 21 June. St. Agnes indeed has the unique honour of a second feast—St. Agnes *secundo*—28 January, which would be her octave-day if she ranked so high in the Universal Church as to be honoured with an octave. We pass over Dr. Rawes' tribute to St. Agnes which she shares with St. Aloysius, and another of our own which she shares with her foster-sister, St. Emerentiana; and our next Agnesian poem will be the epic or rather the idyl of her story told in heroic verse by the Rev. William Hughes, S.J., a holy and learned man, who worked and died in Australia.

With gentle violence through His Sacred Heart,
Oft Jesus draws us from this world apart,
To give our youthful hearts' unstained love
To Him who rules the happy realms above,
And wreathes the brows of every proven friend
With never-ending crowns for toils which end.
But yet we spurn His tenderness Divine,
And earthward let our love too oft incline.

Not thus did she who 'mid the virgin train
Now follows near the Lamb through Heaven's domain,
Who joyously the spotless vesture wears,
The martyr's palm and virgin's lily bears:
Saint Agnes, who despised alike of earth
The pains and pleasures as of equal worth.

Decked in all maiden graces like the spring,
Which makes field bloom, and wood with music ring,
Where'er she comes she gladdens every breast,
And every face in greeting smiles is drest,
As on she glides, the loveliest, the best.
Around her fairy steps the nobles press,
To bask i' the sunlight of her loveliness,
To win a smile, to catch her drooping eyes,
Or glean a hope that she may heed their sighs:
But vain the honeyed vows of love they pay,
Since she is pledged the bride of Heaven for aye.

"Why scorn the sway of love?" the youths exclaim,
 "To live in lonely loveliness is shame;
 When youth and beauty kindle up love's fire,
 Why, shuddering, from its cheerful blaze retire?"
 Then one, more haughty, from the encircling crowd,
 Accosts the shrinking maid, in accents proud:
 "It must be that you love some low-born slave,
 Since thus our suit you scorn, our anger brave.
 Leave her, my comrades, let us seek elsewhere
 A heart less sordid and a face more fair."

A burning flush o'erspreads the maiden's cheek,
 Who, from her heaving bosom, tries to speak.
 At length her words in silvery whispers come,
 Whilst all the youths in tranced hush are dumb.
 "Ah! why not heed a helpless maiden's prayer,
 From whom no love on earth can claim a care?
 Go where your love may be with smiles repaid;
 The vows I've pledged must never be unsaid."

"Yes," cried the haughty youth with anger fired,
 "But tell by whom this vestal flame's inspired?"

"Oh! had you known *Who* claims my heart," she cried,
 "For Him you'd cast all earthly love aside;
 He, everliving, yet in time was born
 Of Virgin-Mother, as a babe forlorn,
 That I might pity Him in His distress,
 And languish o'er His very helplessness.
 Immortal! Yet He died that I might be
 Exempt from living death eternally.
 He drained His life-blood through His severed side
 For love of me, and ope'd a pathway wide,
 That I might enter e'en His inmost heart
 And there abide, and from it ne'er depart.
 So there I dwell, and list His loving voice,
 Which makes my soul for promised bliss rejoice.
 I bless His love, which sheds along my way,
 In reckless plenty, flowers which ne'er decay;
 His tender care, which blunts the envenomed sting.
 When sorrow's bitter pangs my bosom wring;
 Jesus! my God, my life, my love, my Lord,
 Mayst Thou be blessed and praised, be loved, adored."

For Thee I pine. Haste, haste to lead me home,
Nor let me longer in this exile roam."

She said; the youths, by hate and fury swayed,
At once drag off the dauntless Christian maid
Before a judge, who sits amidst a brood
Of armed attendants hungering after blood,
Her story heard, the frowning judge replies :
"To Roman gods prepare to sacrifice:
Else you will find, when here exposed to shame,
How small your Jesus' power to shield your fame."

The haughty youth now casts a glance too free
Upon that face of austere sanctity;
To earth he falls with screams of wild affright,
His sight is quenched, his day is turned to night.
The shuddering crowd revere the awful sign,
But hardly trace therein the Hand Divine;
Yet soon the youth before the Saint they lay,
That she may drive his dreadful doom away.
She prays to Jesus, who regards her sighs,
And takes the withering curse from off the wretch's eyes.

Now yell the rabble: "Let the sorceress die!"
The savage headsman longs his blade to ply;
The grim attendants make the furnace blaze,
Before the tender maid's unshrinking gaze.
She smiles to think that bliss is drawing near;
That they should spare her was her only fear:
So when she hears the shouts for blood arise,
She seems to taste the joys of Paradise.

Nor long she *seems*; full soon the ruthless sword
Severs her life and speeds her to her Lord,
To wear the unfading crown eternally
Of those who purely live and bravely die.

Some one speaks of "the charities of poor to poor".
It would be interesting and profitable to study the
devotion of saint to saint—the special attraction that
certain saints on earth, while their crowns were
yet unsecured, have felt and cherished towards cer-
tain saints in heaven. One example would be

St. Edward the Confessor's devotion to St. John the Evangelist. Many of the saints, while they were still only trying to be saints, have felt thus towards our little St. Agnes: for instance, St. Gertrude. We read in her "Life and Revelations," that on the night of a certain feast of "St. Agnes the beloved of God," she rejoiced greatly in the glory and joy which the love of this saint had given to our Lord. And when St. Gertrude, thinking of the insults offered to Jesus in the person of His little spouse, exclaimed sorrowfully: "Alas, my Lord and my God, what does not Thy Divine Majesty suffer from men?" Our Lord replied: "The perfect love which united Me and Agnes, satisfied Me for all these indignities". Nay, not only on 21st January, but on 28th August, Gertrude thinks of Agnes. On the Feast of St. Augustine, as God showed Gertrude the merits of many saints, she desired to know something of the merits of St. Agnes, whom she had loved from her very infancy with the greatest tenderness and devotion. Our Lord yielded to her desire and prayer, and showed her that great saint, so united to His heart as to indicate her extraordinary innocence and to manifest the truth of that saying of the Wise Man (Wisd. vi. 20), "*Incorruption bringeth near to God*"; for so near did she seem to be to God, that it appeared as if no one in heaven could equal her innocence and love. From this, St. Gertrude learned, that there is not an instant in which God does not place before Him the devotion and joy which holy souls have either felt, or will yet feel, from the sweet words of St. Agnes which are recited by the Church, and that He causes the pleas-

ure which He finds therein to pour forth from His Heart into that of the holy Virgin, which is so intimately united to His, while she becomes marvelously adorned thereby with new jewels, casting rays of light every moment into those souls who rejoice in being devout to her.

Many other saints have signalized their devotion to St. Agnes, emulating her parents, of whom it is written that "night and day they prayed at her sepulchre, for their tender love and sweet memory of such a daughter". One other such devotee of St. Agnes must be named; and then our little "cloud of witnesses" may break, melting away, perhaps, into a tear of affection for the Child-martyr of Purity, and a tear of pity for ourselves, who are striving (could the angels, looking on, guess it?), striving after the same heaven as St. Agnes. This latest of her clients is not a canonized saint, but a holy and learned man, an American Jesuit, with an Irish name, who met his death under the following circumstances:—

Father Joseph O'Callaghan, S.J., sailed from Havre in January, 1869. On the 21st a storm came on. The Father remarked to his companions that it seemed strange the Feast Day of St. Agnes should be so different from the spirit and character of the saint herself, for "*She* was all amiable and sweet and tranquil," he said. "Father O'Callaghan," adds the writer, "had always shown the most tender devotion towards St. Agnes. At Rome, a few weeks before, he had visited frequently her two beautiful churches, and sought out all the spots connected with her memory." The saint may seem to have taken a

strange way of rewarding her client ; for it was while reading second Vespers of her Office that he was killed almost instantaneously by the falling in of the roof of the cabin in which he was seated. But his reward indeed began then ; for we may hope that this sudden death found him prepared to spend, if not the remainder of the first, the second feast of St. Agnes in heaven.

No signature is given to the following, which appeared in the English "Messenger of the Sacred Heart". It is short and sweet.

St. Agnes wins us young and old,
So small, so frail, so fair ;
She makes the young be firm and bold,
She leads the old to prayer.

She wins the young and old : she prays,
So fair, so frail, so small ;
She stays the old in narrow ways,
She cheers whene'er they fall.

She suffers with a fearless heart,
So frail, so small, so fair,
The very children learn their part :
To stand, to wait, to bear.

Dear little lamb, lead on before,
So fair, so frail, so strong ;
We gladly follow evermore
The happy way along.

The following sonnet is by Helena Callanan, to whom the reader may listen with more sympathy if I describe her as an inmate of the Blind Asylum in Cork.

With modest courage, eyes undimmed by tears,
She stood before the tyrant in his might ;
Her martyr-soul prepared for that high flight

Which soars above all earthly craven fears;
 A fair child crowned with thirteen golden years,
 Her rapt gaze fixed as on the vision bright
 Of her Love's glory breaking on her sight;
 She heeded not the soldiers' savage jeers;
 She heard the Bridegroom's mystic whisperings
 So sad, so sweet, as if from Calvary's height;
 And Calvary's shadow touched her soul's bright wings,
 And in her virgin wreath she longed to twine
 The crimson passion flower with lilies white,
 And shining roses for her Spouse Divine.

Another Irish maiden, Cassie O'Hara, who overcame extraordinary difficulties in order to die a holy Carmelite at Darlington, addresses our amiable saint more personally and directly.

Child in thy years and in thy guileless air,
 Yet more than woman in thy dauntless heart !
 Spouse of the Lamb, and lamb in name—thou art
 The saint of saints, to those bright few who wear
 The mystic robe unstain'd. Thou couldst not bear
 In thy young soul—and live—the glowing dart
 Of Love Divine, but longedst for the smart
 Of steel, to waft thee to His palace fair.
 Oh ! hadst thou faltered when the voice of home
 And mortal love had fain allurèd thee,
 Where now had been thy living world-wide fame ?
 One matron more the high-born ranks of Rome
 Had swell'd; but Heaven's virgin galaxy,
 Agnes, had never known thy winning name.

I restrain myself with difficulty from making many other additions to this Agnesian anthology ; but these musical verses by Father J. W. Atkinson, S.J., cannot be excluded :—

Little St. Agnes, a lily-bud furlèd,
 Grew in the garden-croft of the world;
 And many a bramble and many a thorn
 Were rife in the soil where she was born.

But up through the brambles she sprang so fair
That all were ravished at seeing her there ;
She was so lovely and pure and white,
She took the angels with sheer delight.

Lovely and pure and fair was she
As the loveliest flower of earth may be,
That no one gazed but would fain behold
The perfect crown of her leaves unfold.

Yet never a petal this lily uncurled,
For all the desire of all the world,
But over her beauty she bowed them low
And rose in maiden majesty so.

And the sun of riches and rank and power
Shone as it might on this frailest flower,
And the sweet strong breezes of passion blew
Above the place where she glowed and grew.

And the dew of flattery fain would slide
Into the heart that she strove to hide,
And the rain of violence tried to beat
The gates asunder of her retreat.

But ever her petals were firmly closed,
And ever unsullied her heart reposed ;
For only the Gardener, God's own Son,
The love of this lonely lily had won.

The wind and the rain and the heat and the cold
Might not the crown of her life behold ;
Till they chafed together and planned to kill
The flower that angered their haughty will.

And they that had striven for love of her, they
For wrath and hatred were strong to slay :
Prone on the ground fell flower and stem
And root of the lily that slighted them.

But the Gardener passed as the deed was done,
And raised the bud that His Heart had won ;
Pressed to His bosom He bore it far,
Beyond the range of the farthest star.

Far to His beautiful home He bore
The lily that earth might see no more,
And planted it with the loveliest flowers
That erewhile grew in our fairest bowers.

And there, with its petals of snow unfurled,
For ever it gladdens the angel-world—
Little St. Agnes, the child so slight,
Whose purity conquered all earthly might.

We think we have now made good the statement with which we began the present paper, that St. Agnes is a favourite of the Muses. Before we conclude, to show that St. Agnes is still remembered in her own city of Rome, let us cite the account of the celebration of her Feast furnished by a correspondent of "The Freeman's Journal":—

"There is scarcely any Saint in the calendar more popular in the Eternal City than its youthful virgin martyr, the great St. Agnes. If there is another who can claim an equality with her in popular veneration, it is Rome's other virgin martyr, St. Cecilia, whom it reverences as the patron queen of sacred melody. Those who have read (and who is there that has not?) the fascinating story of the catacombs, the 'Fabiola' of Cardinal Wiseman, cannot but remember the charming picture which his Eminence has drawn of the first-named of these martyr saints—of her beautiful life, and of her heroic death. In Rome, her name is a more than 'household word,' and little children are taught to lisp it amongst the earliest of their infant utterances. Two lovely churches are erected here in commemoration of her—one on the spot, and in the very heart of the city, at which she was martyred, and the second about a mile outside the city gate, close

to the catacomb wherein her body was laid, with reverence, love, and tears, as soon as it could be obtained from her brutal, inhuman murderers. The festival of the youthful martyr is celebrated on the 21st of January with all honour and magnificence. The singing at the First Vespers on the evening previous at her church within the city is always an attractive function, and Thursday evening last was no exception to the general rule. The exquisite church, rich in floor, and pillars, and altars of marble, in splendid decoration of painting and statuary, was crowded to excess, both by natives and by strangers. . . . There was not an English, an Irish, Scotch, American, Australian, or other foreign visitor that was not at St. Agnes' to-day, and the Romans themselves mustered there in considerable force as well. The ceremony that brought them all together was in truth a simple, but still in many ways a solemn one. It was nothing more than the blessing of two little milk-white lambs, whose wool is destined to serve as the material of the pallium which each Archbishop consecrated throughout the year will receive from the Holy Father as one of the distinctive emblems of his office and of his dignity. At the conclusion of the High Mass, the little animals were borne, resting each upon a cushion, up the centre of the church; they were decorated with wreaths of flowers and other ornamentation worthy of the prominent share they were to have in the morning's ceremonial. The benediction was soon ended, and they were borne back again, an object of admiration to everybody in the church, to be tended by the good nuns of the neigh-

bouring convent till an archiepiscopal dignity shall have been conferred, and then one of the milk-white lambs falls a victim to the necessity for a pallium."

Thus milk-white lamb, and Christmas rose, and many holy things and holy thoughts are consecrated to St. Agnes. In one of her first novels, "Hester's History," which Dickens introduced to the world, Rosa Mulholland had occasion to describe the quaint contrasts between the masked personages at a certain fancy ball: "So the motley crowd went by. Love jostled Hate, and Misery, Joy. Beauty rubbed skirts with Ugliness, and Security with Danger. There were Winter and Summer, the Devil and an Angel, sylphs and mermaids, a savage and St. Agnes." The story-teller, with plenty of good words at will, wanted to wind up the contrasts emphatically, to put the angelic side, beauty, and love, and gentleness, in the concrete as it were, and to give it a name; and the word which glides from the skilful pen at last is but the name of our young saint, that patroness and favourite of young and old, that dear little Friend of the Sacred Heart—St. Agnes.

ST. MONICA.

(MAY 4.)

NAPOLÉON has often been credited with saying, "What France wants is good mothers"; but it seems that this was rather said to him by a lady with whom he was discussing the condition of their country. What every country wants is good mothers. Mothers have tremendous power and tremendous responsibility. The forming of the child's character begins in its mother's arms.

A pebble in the streamlet scant
Has turned the course of many a river;
A dewdrop on the baby plant
May warp the giant oak for ever.¹

The dewdrops that nourish those baby plants, children's hearts, are mother's tears—tears of love and joy and not seldom sorrow. "Go thy ways, Monica. The child of such tears cannot be lost." If there were more Monicas, there would be more Augustines.

To this sweet and venerable saint, this model of motherhood, I have paid the best tribute that I could

¹ Lord Russell of Killowen was fond of repeating these lines. In the year 1896 he caused an inquiry to be inserted in "Notes and Queries" as to who wrote them. No information was forthcoming.



Ary Scheffer, pinxit]

ST. MONICA AND ST. AUGUSTINE

in a book called "Behold your Mother!" Many things that I should wish to say here now have been said there already in the chapter which dares to speak of the Blessed Virgin herself as the Saint Monica of all Christians. I shall therefore be more than pardoned if my present exercise of filial devotion contains little more of my own, but weaves together a few of the testimonies that others have borne to the greatness and goodness of the mother of St. Augustine.

The most illustrious of these witnesses is Cardinal Newman. When, as an important step towards the realization of a glorious ideal which has not been realized, he built, in St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, the interesting temple which is still called the Catholic University Church, it was a fortunate accident for the accidental glory of St. Monica that the first day he preached in it was the 4th of May, 1856. And so his first words in the new church were these:—

"This day we celebrate one of the most remarkable feasts in the calendar. We commemorate a saint who gained the heavenly crown by prayers and tears, by sleepless nights and weary wanderings, but not in the administration of any high office in the Church, not in the fulfilment of some great resolution or special counsel; not as a teacher, evangelist, reformer, or champion of the faith; not as a bishop of the flock, or temporal governor; not by eloquence, by wisdom, or by controversial success; not in the way of any other saint whom we invoke in the circle of the year; but as a mother seeking and gaining by her penances the conversion of her son. It was for no ordinary son that she prayed, and it was no ordinary

supplication by which she gained him. When a holy man saw its vehemence ere it was successful, he said to her, 'Go in peace; the son of such prayers cannot perish'. The prediction was fulfilled beyond its letter; not only was that young man converted, but after his conversion he became a saint; not only a saint, but a doctor also, and instructed many unto justice. St. Augustine was the son for whom she prayed; and if he has been a luminary for all ages of the Church since, many thanks do we owe to his mother, St. Monica, who, having borne him in the flesh, travailed for him in the spirit.

"The Church, in her choice of a gospel for this feast, has likened St. Monica to the desolate widow whom our Lord met at the gates of the city as she was going forth to bury the corpse of her only son. He saw her and said, 'Weep not,' and He touched the bier and the dead arose. St. Monica asked and obtained a more noble miracle. Many a mother who is anxious for her son's bodily welfare neglects the soul. So did not this saint of to-day; her son might be accomplished, eloquent, able, and distinguished; all this was nothing to her while he was dead in God's sight; while he was the slave of sin; while he was the prey of heresy; she desired his true life. She wearied heaven with prayer, and wore herself out with praying. She did not at once prevail. He left his home; he was carried forward by his four bearers, ignorance, pride, appetite, ambition; he was carried out into a foreign country, he crossed over from Africa to Italy. She followed him: she followed the corpse, the chief, the only mourner; she went

where he went, from city to city. It was nothing to her to leave her dear home and her native soil ; she had no country below ; her sole rest, her sole repose, her *Nunc dimittis*, was his new birth.

“ So while she still walked forth in deep anguish and isolation, and in silent prayer, she was at length rewarded by the long-coveted miracle. Grace melted the proud heart, and purified the corrupt breast of Augustine, and restored and comforted his mother ; and hence, in to-day’s Collect, God is especially addressed as *Moerentium consolator et in Te sperantium salus*, the consoler of those that mourn, and the health of those that hope. And thus, Monica, as the widow in the Gospel, becomes an image of Holy Church, who is ever lamenting over her lost children, and by her importunate prayers ever recovering them from the grave of sin.”

And then the holy man goes on to expatiate, with his refined and restrained eloquence, on “ Intellect as the instrument of religious training”. Sometimes the name that we are linking with his breaks in again. “ And still, again and again, does helpless Monica weep.” And at the very end he raises his eyes to her. “ Look down, then, upon us from Heaven, O blessed Monica, for we are engaged in supplying that very want which called for thy prayers and gained for thee thy crown.”

Our next testimony comes very appropriately from an Irish son of St. Augustine, Father Alphonsus Walsh, O.S.A. :—

No sweeter story, Monica, than thine
Is left us in the annals of the years ;
Of human things it speaks, and of divine,
Of rapture and of tears.

We see thee 'mid the glooms and lights of home,
And hear beloved voices once again ;
We see thee lonely in the streets of Rome,
And feel thy exile's pain.

We see thee face to face with life and duty,
Winning to God thy husband's stubborn heart ;
We see thee, clothed in thy mystic beauty,
Do well a mother's part.

Thy son is thine, who gavest him to earth,
And thine his heart, so tender and so human,
And he is thine by right of better birth,
O strong and valiant woman !

The early lights that shine upon his youth
Are but the radiance of thy motherhood,
And thine is every shaft of Christian truth
That warmed his pagan blood.

Thy voice unto his heart of Jesus spoke,
And cast that name into its furrows deep,
And thine the rainfall of the tears that woke
The seedling from its sleep.

And thine the weary feet, that for his sake
Trudged by him through the night-time of his dole,
And thine the eyes that saw the morning break
Upon his darkling soul.

And thine the heart that one with his in love
Once watched beside the Tyrrhene sea, at even,
And, soaring earth and purple sea above,
Beheld, one moment, Heaven !

And thine the life that in such rapture closes,
All mindless of the grave that holds the dust
Which, far from home, in Christian hope reposes,
To rise with all the just.

The Augustinian Father annotates his concluding stanza by mentioning that the holy relics of St. Monica were transferred by Pope Martin V from Ostia (where she died) to Rome, where they are venerated in the Church of St. Augustine.

Another metrical version of our saint's story will, I fear, have quite sufficient novelty for the readers of this page, though it is to be found already in my book of sacred verses called "Vespers and Compline":—

Among the sainted matrons whom we honour
With Mass and matin song,
One draws the gaze of filial love upon her
From all the throng.
Next to St. Anne, the Blessed Virgin's mother,
I prize St. Monica o'er every other.

Great is the glory of Augustine—high
His place on earth, in Heaven ;
But if St. Monica with prayer and sigh
Less hard had striven
To bring the child forth to his truer birth,
What were his fame in heaven, and e'en on earth ?

His father's name to us is nothing strange—
"Patrick," but, ah ! no saint.
Saint surely she who all so soon could change
That pagan taint—
Who wept and prayed and suffered till she won
Her heathen husband, her half-heathen son.

Have you not seen them sitting on the beach ?
The younger face less fair—
They talk not, 'tis society for each
The other's there—
Hands interlaced, deep eyes upturned in thought :
Their hearts bless God, whose grace the change hath wrought.

Hid in her son, yet many a touching trace
In Austin's page we find,
Which shows her like to him not more in face
Than royal mind,
Another item for the common story—
How large a mother's part in hero's glory.

St. Monica, still many a mother shares
Thy strong maternal faith,
Still sheds such bitter tears, still breathes such prayers,
To save from death
Some soul perchance from all hearts else exiled
As vile or wicked, yet *her* child, her child !
Pray for the wretched mothers who this hour
Weep for the doubly dead ;
Weep for the cherished wanderer, and shower
Tears on *his* head,
Whose faults and sins would weary out all others,
Save the meek heart of Jesus, or a mother's.

When thou hadst longer been away from earth
Than she (God rest her !) yet
Who did far more for me than give me birth,
Whose cheek was wet
With tears less bitter (God be thanked !) than thine,
Austin asked prayers for thee—and I for mine.

Be *Monicas*, O mothers ! pray and weep,
Send ceaseless sighs to Heaven,
That ye for heaven and God secure may keep
Whom God has given.
Love them, but save their souls at any cost—
"The child of holy tears cannot be lost".

The fourth of these stanzas alludes to Ary Schef-fer's beautiful picture of St. Monica and St. Augustine which the little photograph has spread everywhere. The last stanza but one refers to a passage in St. Augustine's "Confessions," where he records his mother's last words to him when she was dying at

Ostia : " This only I ask of you, that, wherever you be, you remember me at the altar of the Lord ". And the great man, acknowledged by all to be one of the greatest men that ever lived, wishes other prayers to be joined to his own. " Do Thou, O Lord my God, inspire Thy servants, my brethren, that so many as read those ' Confessions ' may at Thy altar remember Thy handmaid, Monica, with Patricius her husband, through whom Thou broughtest me into this life."

Many to whom the name of St. Augustine's mother is very familiar will perhaps notice for the first time in this passage that his father bore the name of our great Irish apostle, St. Patrick. Like her son, her husband also furnished St. Monica with many an opportunity for exercising patience and other solid virtues; and for him, too, she secured a happy Christian death.

Not in heart only, but also in intellect, St. Monica was worthy of her illustrious son. Her keen intelligence is brought out delightfully by the Rev. Frederick C. Kolbe, D.D., of Cape Town, a gifted convert who has done eminent service for religion, and especially for Catholic education and Catholic literature, in South Africa. We venture to quote him at great length, from the pages of the " South African Catholic Magazine " which he founded. St. Augustine has never been translated so well as in the passages here quoted.

Few things in the works of St. Augustine are more valuable than the transparent way in which he portrays himself. Through the whole range of history

there is hardly one man whose inner life can be more intimately known, and there are very few indeed who are more worth knowing. All the history of his conversion is especially familiar to us : the despair of his powerful intellect in its search after truth ; his giving rein to his strong passions ; the glorious victory of truth, which the Church has ever celebrated with joy. But behind and through it all a sweet face looks upon us which we can never separate from this wonderful story—the face of St. Monica ; the model of Christian mothers, who followed her wayward son through all his wanderings with sighs and prayers and tears, who “ mourned more for his errors than mothers generally mourn for the death of their sons,” and who, “after having brought him forth in the flesh to the light of this world, brought him forth again in her heart to the light of the world to come”. We know her well, for her son has given us her portrait, faithfully drawn with loving and delicate hand. We know that in her youth she was beautiful, and was reverently loved and admired by her husband. Her mother-in-law, who had been estranged from her by the calumnies of servants, she overcame by kind offices, forbearance, and meekness. She had the priceless gift of knowing when to hold her tongue and when to speak, and thus, though her husband was a hot-tempered, impulsive man, she lived through her long wedded life without a single quarrel ; for, when he was angry, she would resist him neither in word nor in deed at the time, but afterwards, going and talking matters over with him when he was quiet, always succeeded in bringing him to reason.

Again, when she was once following St. Augustine from Africa to Italy, a violent storm arose, and all, even the hardy seamen, lost heart, while St. Monica alone preserved her peace of mind and went about encouraging the sailors to do their best, assuring them that they should reach land safely, for she had seen a vision from God. Later on, at the time when St. Ambrose was being persecuted by the Arian Empress Justina, and special prayer was being made in the Church of Milan, and the faithful were watching in the cathedral, ready to die with their bishop, St. Monica was there and held the first place in watching and anxiety. "She lived on prayers," is her son's energetic expression. "Whoever knew her, therefore, praised and honoured and loved God in her; for her holy conversation was an evident proof that God was ever present in her heart."

So accustomed are we to these memories of her that perhaps there are not many of us to whom the idea of "St. Monica among the philosophers" would not be new, if not strange. Yet the early writings of St. Augustine show that his mother had an exceedingly beautiful mind. Her maternal heart was her greatest talent and was the most splendidly used, but it is well not to forget that she was worthy to be the mother of Augustine the theologian as well as of Augustine the saint.

St. Augustine finally gave his heart to the Church in the summer of 386. He was at the time a professor of rhetoric in Milan, but in order to prepare himself more fittingly for the Sacrament of Baptism he gave up his school and retired into the country, to a villa

which had been kindly placed at his disposal by his friend Verecundus. He was not alone. St. Monica was there, "full of strong faith, of motherly love, of Christian piety," says her son; her heart overflowing with gratitude for the great good that God was providing for her old age, and calmly awaiting the supreme moment, the end of thirty years of prayers and tears. Alypius, too, was there, Augustine's friend from earliest youth, "the brother of his heart," who, after being his disciple in philosophy, joined him in the Manichæan heresy, joined him again in his conversion to the Catholic Church, and was now, *catechumenus cum catechumeno*, preparing with intense fervour for baptism. There were also Navigius, Augustine's brother; Las-tidianus and Rusticus, his cousins, who had not gone through any course of study, but were remarkable for their strong common sense; also Trygetius and Licentius, fellow-citizens and pupils of Augustine; and, last and least of all, little Adeodatus—"the son of my illicit love; but Thou formedst him well, O Lord my God, Creator of all things and all-powerful to draw good out of the evil we commit". St. Augustine loved the dear little fellow very much and was never tired of praising his talents, "which, unless love deceives me, promise great things"; and especially glad was he to take the lad to the baptismal font with him, father and son being born again together of water and the Holy Ghost. It was just like St. Augustine to give him such a name—Adeodatus, God's gift—but he had ere long to learn to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," for Adeodatus died prematurely

at the very beginning of the fair promise of his youth.

Such was the little company of whose *villeggiatura*, half retreat, half vacation, I am to give a slight account—mostly, indeed, in St. Augustine's own words, which I hope will not lose all their beauty even in my feeble translation.

It is not necessary to say that their devotions were constant and fervent—how fervent St. Augustine himself tells us in a little incident which may make us smile. He was suffering intensely from toothache, and at last the pain grew so bad that he could not speak. So, writing upon a wax tablet, he begged them all to pray for relief for him, and no sooner had they knelt down than the pain entirely vanished. But it is of their intellectual occupations that we have the fullest record; and it is of these that I wish to write, with special reference to St. Monica's share in them.

The book which gives us the most vivid idea of their mode of life is that entitled "De Ordine"—a book, or rather a long letter, written to an absent friend, Zenobius, who had had some discussions with Augustine on this subject of Order, and was now asking for more instruction. What this *Ordo* is it is hard to express in English; it embraces all ideas akin to order, law, harmony, etc., and is equally concerned with the physical laws of matter and with God as the Cause Exemplar of the universe. This is the homely and charming way the subject is introduced:—

"I was lying awake one night, according to my

wont, silently following out the various trains of thought that came into my mind. My love of seeking after truth had made this quite a habit with me, so that regularly every night I spent either the first or the last watches, at any rate always nearly half the night, in thoughts of this kind; nor would I permit my young pupils to draw me away from myself by sitting up at night to study, for they worked quite enough in the daytime, and, if they added the night to it, it would have been excessive. Besides, it was part of my system that they should spend some time in thought away from their books and should accustom themselves to reflection and introspection. So, as I was saying, I was lying awake, when the sound of a little stream of water that flows past our house from the Baths suddenly arrested my attention. It seemed strange to me that the sound came intermittently, now louder, now softer, as the stream ran over the stones, and I began to ask myself what could be the cause of this phenomenon. I confess I was unable to find one. Just at this moment Licentius, moving in bed, startled some marauding mice who scampered off, and thus betrayed the fact that he, too, was awake. 'Licentius,' I said '(for I see that your Muses have lit their lamps for you to study by¹), have you noticed how irregular is the murmur of that little stream?' 'Oh! yes,' he replied, 'that is nothing new to me; at times when I wake in the night, and am particularly anxious for fine weather next day, I listen for any chance indications of rain, and the stream often goes on just like that.' Here Trygetius broke in and

¹ Licentius was then engaged in the study of poetry.

said he had also noticed it. So it turned out that he, too, had been lying awake without our knowing it, for it was dark. (In Italy, you know, even those who are well off have to dispense with lights at night.) Finding that our whole school (all of it, that is, that was at home, for Alypius and Navigius were away in town) was wide awake, and hearing the little stream crying out to have something said about it, I began: 'Well, now, what do you think is the cause of this alternation of sound?' "

This commenced a discussion which led directly into the subject of the book—viz., the Order which pervades the whole universe. Meanwhile morning came, and the two youths rose and dressed first.

"Then I, too, rose, and after our daily prayers we set out for the Baths, the best and most familiar place for discussion when the weather was not fine enough for the fields. On our way, just before our door, we found two cocks engaged in an exceedingly brisk encounter. It struck our fancy to stay and watch it. For where will not the eyes of the lover of truth and beauty find images of the object of his search? As, for instance, even in these very fighting cocks—heads eagerly stretched forward, feathers erect, attacks full of energy, defence full of caution, and in every movement of these irrational animals nothing that was not becoming, as being the effect of a superior Intelligence ruling all things from above. Then the expression of the very idea of a conqueror—the proud song of triumph, all the limbs smoothed and shaped and directed to the one feeling of the pomp and consciousness of superiority. On the other hand, the

sign of the conquered—the feathers all ruffled, all elegance vanished from voice and motion, and therefore in some sense all harmonious with the laws of nature, and even beautiful.

“Many were the questions we put. Why were all such birds like this? Why this intense desire for superiority? Why, again, did the mere looking at the fight give us a distinct pleasure apart from all higher considerations? What was there in us which kept seeking after things so far removed from sense? What, on the other hand, was there in us which was so easily taken captive by the senses themselves? Then we said amongst ourselves: Where is there not law and order? Where is not success the meed of the fittest? Where do we not find the shadow of permanence? Where is there not to be seen the likeness of true eternal beauty? Where is there not government and moderation? This last question reminded us that there must also be moderation in standing and looking at things; so we continued our walk to the Baths.”

Here they resumed the discussion on Order, Licentius and Trygetius maintaining the proposition that order pervades all things, St. Augustine pretending to upset it; and it was during this conversation that St. Monica was definitely entered as one of the philosophers. The scene loses all its sparkle in the translation, but I give it as nearly as I can:—

“Meanwhile my mother entered and asked how we were getting on, for she knew of the subject of our debate. And when, according to our custom, I bade them write down her entrance and her question,

she said : ' What are you doing ? Have I ever heard of women being introduced into this sort of discussion in those books which you read ? ' ' I don't care much,' I replied, ' about the judgment of proud and incapable persons, who are guided in their reading of books by the same test as in their saluting of passers-by — that is, by external appearance and wealth and fashion. . . . But if my book falls into anyone's hands, and on reading my name on the title-page he does not say, Who is this ? and throw the volume away, but, whether from curiosity or from eagerness for truth, he disregards the lowliness of the doorway and enters, then he will not take it amiss that I have associated you, my mother, with myself in philosophical pursuits. . . . Nor, indeed, will there be wanting those to whom the mere fact of finding you amongst us will be a pleasure. . . . For amongst the ancients there used to be women philosophers ; and after all, my dear mother, you know I like your philosophy very much indeed. The Greek word philosophy, as perhaps you may not know, means nothing else than love of wisdom ; and the Divine Scriptures, which you love so much, do not, when they warn us against philosophy, mean philosophy in its true sense, but the philosophy of this world. There is another world, far removed from these our bodily eyes ; and few and perfect are those whose intellect gazes upon it. . . . I should, therefore, pass you over in these my writings, if you did not love wisdom ; but I should not pass you over if you loved it, were it only moderately ; much less if you loved it as much as I do. But now that I

know that you love it far more even than you love me (and I know how much you love me), and now that you have so far progressed in wisdom that no ill-fortune, and not death itself (so formidable even to the wisest), can move you with fear—a degree which all confess to be the very height of philosophy—think you that I shall pass you by? Nay, I will even sit at your feet as your disciple.’”

Here St. Monica smilingly and modestly assured St. Augustine that he had never told so many lies in all his life before. Nevertheless, in spite of all protests, she was duly enrolled as one of the interlocutors in this philosophical conversation, which owes no little of its beauty to her presence. The arguments, however, are too long to be reproduced and too abstruse to be condensed; and, besides, St. Monica was not so much at home in metaphysical truth as in moral. Let us turn, therefore, to the “*De Beata Vita*,” a dialogue in which she took a far larger and more important part. It is a dialogue worthy to be ranked among those of Plato—a very idyl of philosophy. I can but once more express the hope that the charm will not have entirely vanished under my treatment. The question was, What is true happiness of life? and it was introduced by the following preface:—

“The 13th of November was my birthday. After a dinner moderate enough not to check the play of the understanding, I invited all who were living with me (Alypius alone being absent) to adjourn to the Baths, the fittest and quietest place at that time of day for conversation. . . . When all were ready, I

thus began : 'I suppose it is evident to you that we are composed of body and soul?' All agreed except Navigius, who said he did not know. Whereupon I said : 'Do you mean that there is nothing at all that you do know, or that of the few things that you do not know this is one?' 'I should hardly think that my ignorance was quite universal,' he replied. 'Well, then,' said I, 'suppose you tell us something that you really do know.' 'Certainly,' said he. And yet on trying he was unable to do so."

By a few well-put questions St. Augustine shows him that after all he is philosophically certain of the fact that we are composed of soul and body.

"'This being so,' I pursued, 'I want to know why we take food.' 'For the body's sake,' at once answered Licentius : but the others hesitated, urging that food was meant to preserve life, and life was the special attribute of the *soul*. . . . After a while, however, all granted that material food was taken for the sake of the body.

"'How, then?' said I; 'shall the soul have no nourishment for itself? What think you? Is knowledge its food?' 'Certainly,' said my mother : 'I do not think that there is any other fit food for the soul than the knowledge and understanding of things'. Here Trygetius demurred, but my mother pressed him hard : 'You yourself,' she said, 'are a practical proof of what the soul feeds on. For to-day at dinner you said you had not noticed what dish you had been eating of, because you had been cogitating something I know not what, and yet your hands and teeth were going busily enough all the time. Where, then, was

your soul while your body was feasting? Was it not among your theories and speculations, trying if by any chance it could find some nourishment there?’

“When we were all agreed so far, I said that as to-day was my birthday, and I had already provided a little feast for the body, it was fitting that I should also provide them a feast for the soul; and that if they were hungry, as they certainly ought to be if their souls were in a good, healthy state, I should at once proceed to lay it before them. All at once exclaimed with voice and looks that they were hungry enough for anything I might have prepared.

“Whereupon beginning again, I said: ‘I think I may take it for granted that we all wish to be *happy*?’ All assented eagerly. ‘Well, then, does it seem to you that a man can be happy as long as he has not what he wants?’ Every one said no. ‘Then every one who has what he wants is happy?’ My mother replied: ‘If he wants that which is good, and has it, he is happy; but if he wants that which is bad, he is unhappy, though he have it.’ ‘Well said indeed, mother,’ I rejoined; ‘you have gained the very heights of philosophy at a single bound.’ . . .”

After a short conversation on St. Monica’s answer—.

“‘Nothing, therefore, remains,’ said Licentius, ‘but for you to tell us what a man *ought* to want, what desires he ought to have, in order to be happy.’ ‘Wait a little,’ I replied; ‘if you will be so kind as to invite me on your birthday, I shall be most glad to feast on anything you lay before me. But to-day it is I who have invited you, and I must beg you not

to call for dishes that may possibly not have been prepared.' ”

It was then agreed that they had at least arrived at this result : that no man is happy who has not what he wants, and yet that not every one who has what he wants is happy. They agreed further that there was no medium between *happy* and *unhappy*, and that, therefore, all men necessarily fall into one of these two classes. Then, in order after all to satisfy Licentius' appetite, St. Augustine instituted the question as to what a man ought to have in order to be happy. They agreed it could be nothing mortal, nothing that passes away, nothing subject to loss or vicissitude, or even to the fear of change ; for whatever beatifying qualities the goods of this world might possess, the fact that it was *possible* to lose them was enough to prevent perfect happiness. Here, however, St. Monica put in a qualification :—

“Even though a man had all the goods of this world, and were quite sure that he should never lose them, still they would not be enough to satisfy him ; and, therefore, he must ever remain unhappy, for he will ever remain needy in spite of his wealth ”.

(This answer reminds one of the saying of St. Teresa, who could not bear to hear preachers urge the nothingness of this world *because* it passes away ; its nothingness would be far more appalling, she thought, if it were to last for ever.) But St. Augustine pressed the question a little farther and said : “What if a man, possessing all wealth in abundance and superfluity, controls his desires and lives contentedly, pleasantly, and becomingly, does he not

seem to you to be happy?" "Happy, perhaps," she replied; "not, indeed, because of his wealth, but because of the moderation of soul with which he enjoys it." This drew from St. Augustine the joyful exclamation that no better answer was possible, and that nothing should henceforth be considered settled unless St. Monica had first given her opinion. They then passed on to the next step, which was that, God being the only being above vicissitude and change, it followed that he alone who possesses God can be happy. And this definition was received by all with gladness and devotion.

"'Nothing, therefore, remains, except to find out what it is to *possess God*. And on this point I am going to ask the opinion of each of you.' Licentius answered: 'He has God who leads a good life'. Trygetius: 'He has God who does what God would have him do'. Lastidianus agreed with the last speaker. Little Adeodatus, however (*puer autem ille minimus omnium*), thought that 'he has God who has not an unclean spirit'. My mother approved of all, but especially of this last. Navigius said nothing; but on being urged he also decided in favour of the last. Nor would I allow Rusticus to be passed over, for I saw it was not want of thought but shyness that kept him quiet; he finally agreed with Trygetius.

"'Now,' said I, 'I have the opinion of all of you on a matter surely most important, beyond which nothing ought to be sought and nothing can be found. But since the soul as well as the body can indulge in excess of feasting, and such excess results in indigestion and other evils, as much for one as for the other,

perhaps we had better adjourn till to-morrow, when, if you have appetite for more, we shall renew our feast.' ”

The next day, meeting again at the Baths, they discussed the three answers given to the question, “ Who possesses God ? ” finally agreeing that all three amounted to the same thing. Here St. Augustine introduced a little liveliness into the discussion by the following argument:—

“ ‘ Is it God’s will that man should seek God ? ’ All assented. ‘ Can he who is seeking God be said to be leading a bad life ? ’ ‘ Certainly not. ’ ‘ Can he who has an unclean spirit seek God ? ’ ‘ No. ’ ‘ He, therefore, who is seeking God is one who does God’s will, leads a good life, and has not an unclean spirit. But he who is seeking God does not yet possess God. Therefore we cannot forthwith say that a man possesses God, though he live well, though he do God’s will, though he have not an unclean spirit. ’ Here they all laughed at being caught in the trap of their own concessions. But my mother, saying that she had always been stupid at these things, begged to have the argument repeated, that she might see if it were not a mere quibble. Which done, she said : ‘ But no one can possess God without seeking God ’. ‘ Most true, ’ I replied, ‘ but the point is that while he is seeking he does not *yet* possess God ; and still he is leading a good life. ’ ‘ It seems to me, ’ says she, ‘ that there is no one who does not have God ; only those who live well have Him propitious to them, and those who live ill have Him unpropitious. ’ ‘ Well, then, you made a mistake yesterday in grant-

ing that every man is happy who has God ; otherwise, if every man has God, then every man must be happy.' 'Then,' said she, 'let us add as an amendment the word *propitious*.' "

They were now going to make a new start with the conclusion that every man is happy who has God propitious to him. But Navigius, who was the hardest of all the party to get a concession out of, saw that there was here another opening for logical flaws. For if the man is happy to whom God is propitious, and God is propitious to those who seek Him, and those who seek Him do not yet possess Him, and those who do not possess Him do not have what they want, it follows that a man can be happy without having what he wants, which conclusion had also been rejected the day before as absurd. St. Monica tried to evade this difficulty by a middle course. Being driven from this, and knowing that in reality she was right and only seemed to be wrong because of some technical flaw in the argument, she tried for a moment (like a true woman) to cut the knot, but finally said: "Of course, if logic is against me, I yield". "Therefore," said St. Augustine, "what we have come to is this: that he who has already found God both has God propitious to him and is happy; he who is still only seeking God has God propitious to him, but is not happy; he, however, who cuts himself off from God by sin neither is happy nor has God propitious to him." This satisfied everybody.

Still the question was not yet exhausted. The conclusion arrived at was not sufficiently clear with-

out taking in the other side; the shades had to be considered as well as the lights; they had now, therefore, to look at the question from the negative point of view. What was *unhappiness*? Earlier in the discussion St. Monica had assumed that unhappiness and neediness were convertible terms. Was it so? He who has not what he wants (i.e., he who is needy) is unhappy; is it also true that all who are unhappy are needy? If so, they had an infallible criterion wherewith to test happiness, as soon as they should know what neediness was.

When the next day came, the weather was so inviting that instead of going to the Baths they continued the discussion in the open air, reclining in a meadow. After a long argument St. Augustine supposed the case of a man who should possess all he wanted in this life—riches, pleasures, health of mind and body, perfect contentment, etc.; could we call such a man needy? Licentius replied that there must still remain the fear of losing all this good fortune. “Certainly,” rejoined St. Augustine; “and the better the man’s intellect the more clearly would he see the possibility of such loss. But this hardly affects the case; for neediness consists in not having, not in not fearing to lose what we have. The fear makes him unhappy, but does not make him needy; therefore here we have an instance of a man who is unhappy and yet not needy.” To this reasoning all assented except St. Monica, who said: “I am not sure about that, though; I do not yet quite understand how neediness can be separated from unhappiness, or unhappiness from neediness. For even granting

the existence of this supposed man of yours, rich and fortunate as he was, and contented (so you say) with what he had, yet the very fact that he feared to lose his good fortune showed that he wanted *wisdom*. Shall we, then, give the name of needy to the man who lacks gold and silver, and refuse it to the man who lacks wisdom ? ”

“ Here,” says St. Augustine, “ all cried out in admiration, and I, too, was glad and rejoiced above measure to find that she above all had anticipated me in this grand truth which I had drawn from the writings of philosophers, and which I had meant to produce as a crowning delicacy to our banquet. ‘ Do you not see,’ said I, ‘ that it is one thing to know many and varied doctrines, another thing to have the soul intently fixed on God ? Where else did my mother find this philosophy of hers which we are now admiring ? ’ Whereupon Licentius joyously exclaimed : ‘ Assuredly nothing could have been more truly, more divinely said. For no neediness could be greater or more wretched than to lack wisdom ; and he who does not lack wisdom cannot be said to be needy at all, whatever else he may be without. ’ ”

St. Augustine then went on to develop, in his own beautiful and inimitable way, this thought that only the unwise are unhappy and only the wise happy. He defined wisdom as that moderation and balance of soul which prevents its running out into excess or being narrowed by defect. Then passing beyond philosophy, he asked, What is the wisdom which makes men happy, if not the wisdom of God ; and

what is the wisdom of God, if not the Son of God? And what is the rule which moderates and balances the soul, if not the rule of all sanctity—the Holy Spirit? And so the three days' discussion was seen to be harmonious throughout, for they had found that those were happy who possessed God, and, again, that those were happy who possessed wisdom, and that those were wise who possessed the rule of sanctity; whereas now it was seen that God and wisdom and sanctity were one.

“‘This, therefore, is true fullness of soul, this is indeed happiness of life, to know devoutly and perfectly by whom we are led to the truth, what truth is that which we enjoy, and how we may be united to the highest rule of sanctity. These three things, to those who have understanding, excluding all vanities of error and superstition, do show forth God, in nature one and in persons three.’ Here my mother, greeting these words so familiar to her memory, and waking up, as it were, to a full expression of her faith, broke forth joyfully into that verse of our bishop's hymn, ‘*Fove precantes, Trinitas!*’¹ and then added: ‘Perfect life, beyond all doubt, is the only happy life; and to this, by means of firm faith, cheerful hope, and burning love, we shall assuredly be brought if we do but hasten towards it.’”

Thus ended the discussion. St. Augustine thanked his guests and told them that in reality it was they who had been feasting him, and that they had positively loaded him with birthday gifts. All rose joyfully, and Trygetius said: “Oh! how I wish you

¹ One of St. Ambrose's hymns.

would provide us a feast like this every day'. "Moderation in all things, as we have just been seeing," replied St. Augustine; "if this has been a pleasure to you, it is to God alone all our thanks are due."

As we read this delightful dialogue in the original, a breath of fresh air seems to come to us across the centuries; we are sitting on the grass at St. Monica's feet in that meadow so bright with the Italian winter sun, so cheerful with the talking and laughing of the youthful philosophers, so holy with the love of warm hearts whose very recreations rise up to God, whom they know to be the source of all that happiness of life which they are discussing. It is a scene so sunny that not even the ponderous tome in which we read it, its pages brown with the stains of ages, can dim or spoil it. And we hardly check a feeling of sorrow, though it is now no use—sorrow for St. Augustine—when we remember that he must so soon lose the two of that little party whom he loves best. Adeodatus, I have said, died very early. St. Monica died soon after her son's baptism, when they were on their way back together to Africa. The little room at Ostia where she gave forth her pure soul to God is still preserved, and one feels nearer to her after having knelt in it; but her memory has a more precious shrine in the hearts of all Christian mothers and in the gratitude of all Christian sons. "Son," she said to St. Augustine five days before her last illness, as they were leaning on a balcony overlooking the garden at Ostia and talking about the joys of heaven—"Son, as for me, there is no further delight left for me in this life.

What I am doing down here, and why I still remain, I know not, after the hopes of this world have all vanished away. I had only one reason for wishing to stay awhile in this life, and that was that I might see you a Christian and a Catholic before I died. God has given this to me more abundantly even than I had prayed for ; what am I doing down here ? ” And so, with this *Nunc dimittis*, she left the little company of philosophers on earth and entered into the fullness of the joy of the saints in heaven.¹

¹ Though we duly warned the reader at the beginning of this long extract, it seems right to remind him at the end of it that we owe this delightful account of “ St. Monica among the Philosophers ” to the Rev. Dr. Kolbe of South Africa.

ST. PATRICK.

(MARCH 17.)

[A.D. 372-464.]

" I ADMONISH you as my dearest children ; for if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers ; for in Christ Jesus by the Gospel I have begotten you " (1 Cor. iv. 15). This was the proudly affectionate boast which St. Paul addressed to the Christians of Corinth in the first of his Epistles to that infant Church ; and to-day we may very well imagine our own St. Patrick, from his high place in heaven, addressing the same tender appeal to his beloved Church of Ireland, nay, to all his Irish children scattered over the whole world. St. Patrick's Day, the feast of St. Patrick, is our great annual act of thanksgiving for the national gift of faith ; and, while our gratitude must of course ascend finally to the throne of God Himself the giver of all good gifts, it is to be offered also in due measure to God's human instrument, his great servant, St. Patrick, through whom that supreme and fundamental grace, the treasure of the true Faith, first came to our land and to our race, to abide with them for ever.

This is the ground on which St. Patrick claims from us to-day the full tribute of our filial allegiance.



Tiepolo, pinxit]

[Photo : Anderson, Rome

ST. PATRICK HEALS THE SICK

We may have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet only one father; and it is he. We have indeed other saints to pray to: the great Apostle whose words we are putting on St. Patrick's lips, St. Paul, and with him and before him St. Peter, the two mighty pillars of the Christian Church; St. Agnes and St. Aloysius, patrons of purity; Francis of Assisi, the Saint of Poverty, and Francis Xavier, the Saint of Zeal; and before all the saints, except the Queen of Saints herself, we have the saint whose feast is fixed for the day after to-morrow—St. Joseph, patron of a hidden life and of a happy death. To these and to many others, according to our special wants and special circumstances, we may and must cherish a special devotion; but we must never forget the altogether singular and peculiar ties that bind us to St. Patrick—to him who in Christ Jesus by the Gospel has begotten us.

No saint was ever more closely wound up with a people than St. Patrick is wound up with Ireland; there is no other nation on God's earth that possesses a patron-saint so thoroughly national as ours. St. Patrick is all our own, and we are his.

Let us compare him in this respect with the patrons of some of the countries nearest to us. St. Andrew is (or was) the patron of Scotland; but St. Andrew did not convert Scotland, never preached in Scotland—he was made her patron merely because a certain Scottish monastery happened to possess a considerable portion of the Apostle's relics, and so a special devotion to St. Peter's brother sprang up there and extended among the Scottish people.

“St. George for merry England!” was England’s war cry in Catholic times; but St. George in the days of his earthly warfare never saw England, probably never heard of England, and he owes the honour, such as it is, of her clientship to the fact that the English Crusaders, finding the warrior-saint of Mesopotamia high in honour in the East, adopted him as the patron of their arms; and so he came to be the patron-saint of England in general.

St. Louis was a holy King of France; but he did not bring France to God, he did not mould her destiny, he did not turn the course of her history; she would have been much the same if St. Louis had never existed.

Far different, much more direct and urgent, are St. Patrick’s claims to the dignity of Patron of Ireland. This honour—and surely there is no greater honour of the kind in the Church of God on earth or in the Church of God in heaven—this honour St. Patrick owes not to accident or arbitrary choice or to any trivial or extrinsic connexion with our dear land: he owes it to the blessed fact that he himself earned nobly the title—that Catholic Ireland is his work, his trophy, his triumph—that in Christ Jesus by the Gospel he has begotten us.

Yes, Ireland is the Church of St. Patrick; his fame and her are entwined inseparably together. Nay, the very name of Patrick has grown to be, like the typical shamrock, so peculiar to our Celtic race, that the rude scoffer makes it a synonym, an *alias*, for Irishman: certainly not intending by his sneer to pay the compliment which he certainly *does* pay to

the affectionate fidelity with which St. Patrick's children have clung to the faith, to the love, to the very name of their Father.

This one plain historical fact, this permanent impression made by St. Patrick's apostolate upon the destiny of the Irish people—this alone is enough for the glory of our national apostle. That was a very wise conclusion drawn by a little English girl whose mother had told her the story of St. Patrick:¹ "Oh, Mamma, what a great saint St. Patrick must have been to have made the Irish for ever such good Catholics!" And another has boldly put the question:—

What patron saint
E'er did his work so well?—

as if confident that the only answer must be, "None". And indeed that was the answer which Father Faber

¹In "Sundays at Lovell Audley,"—a good book now forgotten. The following sonnet by the Rev. J. B. Chetwood, S.J., is the latest tribute to St. Patrick:—

Proud are the domes the world has raised to show
Where sleep the bones of heroes passed away;
Stately the shafts that to the rising day
Lift fronts imperial, and, throughout the flow
Of men and years that by their bases go,
With an arresting finger seem to say,
"Deeds of the mighty die not, fade not aye
From Fame's account."

Yet not from these men know
Thy deeds, sweet Patriarch! but by a broad,
Fair monument that spans the earth and sea,
Whose stones by ages laid successively,
Firmer by tempests made, more fresh with years,
Inwrought with martyrs' blood and mothers' tears,
Rise ever-whitening in the smile of God,

had already given in the hymn which he wedded to our national tune of "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning":—

There is not a saint in the bright courts of Heaven
More faithful than he to the land of his choice;
Oh! well may the nation to whom he was given
In the feast of their sire and Apostle rejoice!

"By their fruits you shall know them" is our Lord's own test; and if we knew nothing more of St. Patrick than the result of his mission, the mighty and enduring work which God allowed him to accomplish in His Church, this ought to be quite enough to inspire us with an immense love and reverence for his sanctity and a boundless confidence in his intercession.

Yes, this would be enough, even if he were one of those men whom we meet with in history—men who have exercised a vast influence in their day, and yet in the accounts that have reached us of their life and character there seems to be sometimes very little to justify their traditional fame. In all such cases it is wise to trust to the tradition and to accept the estimate formed of those men by the generation amongst whom their lot was cast. So, too, if the accounts of St. Patrick's life were meagre, uneventful, and unromantic, the mere general fact of his triumphant apostleship with its lasting effects would alone prove him to be a great and glorious saint.

But in his case we have no need to resort to any such special pleading. St. Patrick is personally the least disappointing of Saints. There is hardly any saint's life that surpasses his in the pathetic beauty of

the legends that cling round his name, and in the personal impressiveness of his character as revealed in the solid traditions and authentic documents that have come down to us.

Those legends of St. Patrick—and the word “legend” is by no means intended to exclude substantial truth and reality—have inspired the highest flights of poetry and of oratory. They have furnished the theme and even the title of perhaps the noblest effort of the austere and almost sacred Muse of Aubrey de Vere; and one of the sweetest echoes of that eloquent voice which has rendered the name of Burke for the second time illustrious lingers on in this touching apostrophe with which that holy, amiable, and greatly gifted Dominican thrilled the hearts of some thousands of Irish exiles in New York on a certain St. Patrick’s Day some twenty or thirty years ago. After speaking of what Ireland has gone through for the faith of St. Patrick and what she is at the end of it all, when the land is “covered once more with fair churches, convents, colleges, and monasteries, as of old”—he went on to ask, “Who shall say that the religion that could suffer and rise again is not from God? This glorious testimony to God and to His Christ is thine, O holy and venerable land of my birth and of my love! O glory of earth and heaven, to-day thy great Apostle looks down upon thee from his high seat of bliss, and his heart rejoices; to-day the angels of God rejoice over thee, for the light of sanctity which still beams upon thee; to-day thy troops of virgin and martyr saints speak thy praises in the high courts of heaven. And I,

O Mother, far away from thy green bosom, hail thee from afar, and I proclaim this day that there is no land so fair, no spot of earth to be compared to thee, no island rising out of the wave so beautiful as thou art; that neither the sun nor the moon nor the stars of heaven shine down upon anything so lovely as thou art, O Erin!"

Many and many a true Irish heart that could not express its feelings so well has felt the same enthusiastic love, especially when absence made the heart grow fonder. Shame on the Irishman that would not bless God for having let him be born an Irishman. But to-day we are thinking of our Irish birth as a spiritual blessing, and, please God, it is a grace for which we shall be thankful to almighty God for all eternity, that we were born, not in proud Albion or bonnie Scotland or fair France or sunny Spain or beauteous Italy, but in poor Ireland, dear Ireland, Catholic Ireland. For is there a safer corner of God's Church than this island-home of ours?—where fidelity to the Church of Christ, where devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, where loving allegiance to the Vicar of Christ (remember the vulgar cry of Orange bigotry) might almost be called the natural instincts of the heart, breathed in the very air?—where religious observance, in villages and rural districts especially, is a sort of happy necessity; where public opinion and human respect, instead of being (as they are, alas! in many parts of the world) temptations to worldliness and sin, are on the contrary a check and restraint upon vice and an encouragement and support to religion and virtue. So it certainly

has been in the past ; and may St. Patrick's prayers help to secure that to the end it may be so.

I am not going even to allude to any of the picturesque vicissitudes of the long life of our Apostle, but I will only single out the lesson that is taught most emphatically in the authoritative summary of his life which the Church makes her priests read to-day in the Breviary. It is the merest commonplace and matter of course that a saint must be pre-eminently a +
man of prayer ; but of none of the saints in the whole course of the year, especially of far-away saints like him, have we such striking proof that prayer was
his life on earth, as it is his life in heaven. + This indeed is only to say that he was, as he must needs be, a close copy of his Divine Master ; and there are two memorable sayings about our Lord's heavenly life and His earthly life which are especially applicable to our great Patron Saint. We the children of St. Patrick may apply to him what St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews (VII. 25) says of our Redeemer, *Semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis* : " always living to make intercession for us". His prayers can never fail us. As long as any of that race and nation to whom he was sent remains exposed to the temptations of this life, St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland, will plead for them before the throne of God. His prayers for his people will never end till their time of trial is ended ; but when did his prayers for us begin ? Long before his Apostleship itself began ; and it was the prayers of his youth that prepared him for the glorious and fruitful labours of his mature years. The Saint himself in his Confession tells us that during

his six years of captivity after his sixteenth year, on Slemish mountain in County Antrim, he prayed many times in the day, and the love and faith and fear of God grew in him; and by day he said a hundred prayers and by night almost as many; and there upon the mountain before the dawn he was called to prayer by the snow and the rain, and he suffered nought therefrom, for the spirit was burning within him. Was not this a very literal and exact imitation of his Divine Master, of whom it is said *Erat pernoctans in oratione Dei*. "He spent the whole night through in the prayer of God" (Luke vi. 12). Perhaps if St. Patrick had not prayed thus in his boyhood on those Ulster hills, the cry of the Irish would not have gone forth after him: "Come, O holy youth, and dwell amongst us"; and he might never have been chosen by God to return to the land of his captivity in order to rescue her from her worse captivity, the slavery of paganism and sin, and to be her true liberator, her greatest benefactor, the foremost hero in the history of Ireland.

In one of the saddest years of that history, in the year 1798, Napoleon won a great battle in Egypt which is known as the Battle of the Pyramids because it was fought almost under the very shadow of those vast and mysterious monuments which date back some two thousand years before the Christian era. Before the battle he addressed some inspiring words to his troops to nerve them for the charge of the Mameluke cavalry. "Soldiers of France, from the summit of yonder Pyramids four thousand years look down upon you." Gazing up to St. Patrick to-day in his high place in

heaven, may we not imagine him addressing to us a similar exhortation? "My children of Erin, fourteen hundred years look down upon you"—all the sainted and saved of the Irish race during these fourteen centuries of toil and trial.

Christian Ireland is now more than fourteen hundred years old. St. Patrick is believed to have died in the year 493. In those fourteen centuries through what trials, through what privations, through what sufferings, have our forefathers, especially in the penal days, handed on to us in safety the priceless treasure of the Faith! May we and those who are to come after us be worthy of those who have gone before us and who kept the lamp of truth burning brightly in darker and stormier times than ours! May the Irish race, whether here at home in Ireland or scattered everywhere over the wide earth, prove themselves for ever in the future as in the past the faithful and devoted children of St. Patrick!

TO SAINT PATRICK.

O Saint, well honoured of the sons of Ireland,
Whose love for God and home and thee is one,
Look down to-day on thine adopted sire-land,
As thou so long hast done.

These fourteen hundred years in restful glory
Thou thankest God for sixty years of toil,
And here on earth thy name in song and story
No lapse of time can soil.

That promise made upon the Eagle¹ Mountain
After thy sleepless Lent of fast and prayer,
Is still inviolate; truth's crystal fountain
Wells up as pure as e'er.

¹Cruaċhan.

So keep thy children's country through the ages—
 A land of faith and purity and grace,
 That men in far-off days on history's pages
 A blameless tale may trace :—

“ Her sons were true to God through hours of sadness,
 Trusting that joy would end their bitter pain,
 With scorn for scorn, with horror for the madness
 That sinned for her in vain :

“ They knew that righteous deeds of hands unspotted,
 And women's prayers, and little children's cries,
 Were stronger than the avenging steel blood-clotted
 To shape her destinies :

“ And so in hope they lived on, toiling, bearing,
 For her—their mother, stricken, wan, dark-stoled,
 Till morning broke and there they found her wearing
 The crown she wore of old.”

J. W. ATKINSON, S.J.

ST. PATRICK.

On high, before the throne of God, amid the Saints who share
 The glory and the blessedness—is there no loving care
 For us, who in this tearful vale down far below sustain
 The weary fight which they have fought, the crown they've gained to
 gain ?

Ah ! one dear Saint forgets us not, but from the bliss of Heaven
 Yearns fondly towards that spot of earth to which his life was given :
 Father of many children strewn o'er every land and wave,—
 The Guardian Angel of our race, to cheer, and guide, and save.

He came a captive to these shores ; but once again he came,
 “ A conqueror to conquer,” in the might of Peter's name.
 And to our sires what Pontiff sent of Christ the welcome tale ?
 The smiter of the wretch who dared Christ's Mother to assail !

'Twas Celestine whose voice of power at Ephesus proclaimed
 That she, the lowly virgin, must “ Mother of God ” be named.
 And while earth's bosom towards its Queen thrills thus with warmer
 glow,
 Again that voice is raised—to bless our own Apostle. “ Go !

“Go in the name of Mary’s Son—go, Patrick, forth, and bring
Yon lone green Isle beneath the sway of Christ our Saviour-King.
Go forth, and wrest that race of souls from heathendom and hell.
Go forth!”—he went. What patron Saint e’er did his work so well?

He came from Rome and Celestine: St. Celestine is dead:
But Christ for ever lives, and now reigns Pius in his stead,
Upon that throne which towers on high o’er falsehood, sin, and time,
Like to the marvellous dome that crowns St. Peter’s fane sublime.

That throne is still of Christian souls the pilgrim-shrine, the home,
The citadel of Christendom: and still from sovereign Rome
The shepherds of our souls receive the mission Patrick sought;
For they but finish Patrick’s work, and teach as Patrick taught.

Thus, ever since, to Irish hearts unutterably dear
Each instinct of that holy Faith which Patrick planted here;
Dear and more dear the Mother-maid, whose Infant we adore,
And Ireland ever Catholic and Roman to the core.

So hath it been throughout our past, with all its fruitful tears.
So be it in the subtler strife perchance of future years:—
The soul of Ireland fixed for aye in faith and patient hope,
True to God’s Mother and God’s Church, St. Patrick and the Pope.

It shall be so. Oh, grant it, God! By thy Almighty love,
Until the last of Celtic race hath joined his kin above—
Last of the myriad souls elect to Patrick’s bosom given:
On earth our father, father still before God’s throne in Heaven.

M. R.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

(OCTOBER 4.)

[A.D. 1182-1226.]

JESUS said to him: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, follow Me" (Matt. XIX. 21).

These words, whether striking upon the ear or breaking the silence of the heart only, have marked the crisis in the history of many a soul besides him to whom they were spoken first. You remember him. His story is so instructive a warning that the three first Evangelists have set it down for us in full in almost the same terms. A certain youth came to our Lord one day and asked Him: "Master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting?" "If thou wilt enter into life," answered Jesus, "keep the Commandments." "But," said the young man again, "all these I have kept from my youth—what is still wanting to me?" Then Jesus, looking on him, loved him; and He said to him, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come, follow Me". But when the young man had heard this word, he went away, sad: for he had great possessions.



Molitor, pinxt]

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Sad! He might well be sad, going away for ever from Him who had looked upon him and loved him, spurning the magnificent grace of this call to perfection and (as is believed) to the Apostleship, basely shrinking from the glorious toils and the glorious recompense which might have been his in the Church Militant and in the Church Triumphant—going away in order, forsooth, to possess still, for a few years at best, his miserable possessions. Miserable enough, no doubt, his possessions were in themselves, but, no matter what they were, utterly, abjectly miserable and contemptible for one whom Jesus had looked upon with love, and to whom Jesus had said out of His love, “Come, follow Me”—for one who might have been St. John’s rival in the tenderest affections of his Master and in the loving homage of the faithful; for one who might have lived with Jesus, and died for Jesus, and been high among the highest for ever in the kingdom of Jesus. What did that young man gain? And, oh! what did he lose? Even in the few days or years of his life thereafter, what did his possessions avail him, haunted as he was by the ghost of a lost vocation? And when the few days or years of his life were over, what cared he—what cares he *now*—for those “possessions” for the sake of which he went away sad, followed by the yearning Eyes that still said, “Come to Me!”

He went away. Then Jesus, looking round about, said to His disciples: “Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God!”

This scene, the incidents of which I have given in

the very words of one or other of the Evangelists—this pathetic scene, in what it expressed and in what it foreshadowed, was a startling innovation on the notions then current in the world, nay, on the highest lessons of virtue that had yet been proposed to men. Our Divine Master here raises up a new ideal for the aspirations of the human heart. He establishes solemnly the true Christian standard of perfection, and, canonizing Poverty with her sister virtues, He inaugurates Religious Life. For our Lord spoke not these words for one but for many. Alas! of these also how many turn away, sad! What day has passed since then which has not beheld this struggle going on in some soul?

Once this struggle raged in the breast of a young man named Francis Bernadone, living some 600 years ago at Assisi, a town of Central Italy, midway between the two seas. But he, when Jesus said to him, "Sell all and follow Me," *he did not turn away sad*. Else we should not to-day be keeping the Feast of the glorious Saint Francis. His feast has gathered us together in his own church that we may think about him and pray to him. Let our thoughts group themselves round that question which occurred to us this moment in reference to the young man of the Gospel—"What has he lost and what has he gained?" What did Francis of Assisi give to God? What in return has God given to St. Francis? And so (as the old Franciscan chronicles are wont to say) all to the praise of the Lord Jesus and His poor servant Francis.

First, what did Saint Francis give to God? He gave

himself. He gave himself heart and soul, soul and body, the perfect undivided devotion and service of his entire being—all, utterly and irrevocably. A whole-burnt offering, no "pilfering in the holocaust," nothing withheld at the first or retracted afterwards. Every beating of his heart, during the twenty years especially of his ripe manhood after he had embraced religious life, was but an inarticulate sigh of that love which often made itself articulate in the words he was once overheard repeating all night long in an ecstasy, *Deus meus et omnia*—"My God and my all".

Not that he was not already very near and dear to God during his five-and-twenty earlier years of preparation for those extraordinary graces. His mature life of sanctity does not stand out in relief against the dark background of erring passionate youth. He was not of those who, like the Apostle of the Gentiles or the son of Monica, are struck down in their sin and pride and changed suddenly into saints, and then lifted on high as brilliant trophies of the omnipotence of God's grace. God works such miracles, and even His wonted dealings with souls are often greater miracles than raising the dead to life. But God's will is law and order, and miracles can only be rare and astounding exceptions. An ordinary providence rules over the realms of grace as over the realms of nature. Innocence, not Sin, must be the fitting groundwork of Sanctity, and grace well used wins new stores of grace. Francis used God's graces well from the first, though gay and thoughtless enough. "All these I have kept from my youth." *And Jesus looked on him and loved him.*

One peculiar claim upon the peculiar love of Jesus, one blessed mark of predestination, was his—a tender heart for the poor. Once in his most worldly days he was so engrossed in some business that he paid no heed to a beggar who craved an alms. When the beggar had gone away empty-handed, Francis felt his heart troubled. He did not thrust this generous scruple aside as a weakness, but, eagerly running after the poor man, he left him calling down blessings on the head of his benefactor who on his part vowed never again to turn a deaf ear to the prayer of any creature that should ask relief for the love of God. If Francis had hardened his heart against that poor man's prayer, should *we* be praying to him now? At least this charity to the poor, and this fidelity to the divine graces as they came one by one, helped to secure for him the higher grace of listening and obeying when God's voice fell upon his ear at last: "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all thou hast and give to the poor and come, follow Me".

This text of Holy Writ has been chosen as the keynote of our thoughts this morning, not merely because this first explicit invitation to a life of evangelical perfection is applicable in general to all who are honoured with a like vocation, but particularly because those were the very words in which the grace of God spoke to the youthful heart of Francis. *If thou wilt be perfect. Wilt.* All rests with the will. God's glory lies in being served by His poor creatures of their own free will, so weak in its freedom unless it lean trustingly upon grace. *Wilt* thou be perfect? Hast thou the *will*, the high and noble ambition not

merely to secure eternal life and to escape eternal ruin and despair by keeping the Commandments of God but to be *eminent* among the elect of God, to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect, to give special honour to God's name, special joy to the heart of Jesus? Wilt thou be perfect? I will. By the grace of God, with whom nothing is impossible, I will. All sanctity, all perfection, lies in that deep, earnest, humble *I will*; on God's side grace is never wanting.

Francis of Assisi answered *I will*, when Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus of Calvary, whispered "Follow Me!" He followed Him. He did not turn away sad, though he had great possessions. He had, as things were reckoned, much worldly substance; and even if he had little, he had his hopes, the vague desires and ambitious hopes of the young earthly heart. But whether little or much, he gave *all*—when the summons came. Tearing himself away from every shackle of sense and nature, he felt as a captive bird may feel when it has long flung itself in painful and vain efforts against the bars of its prison, but at last it bursts through them and finds itself free once more, soaring upward through the breezy sunshine, higher and higher. "Our soul hath been delivered as a bird out of the snares of the fowlers." *Laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus.* "The snare is broken, and we are free." Let no earthly affection, even the holiest, dare to stand in the way. "Hitherto," said Francis to his father after stripping himself of all, "hitherto I have called you my father—henceforth I shall be able to cry with greater confidence 'Our Father who

art in Heaven'." Just like that ancient monk of the desert who was told, "Your Father is dead"; and he answered, "BlaspHEME not! My Father is Eternal."

Not that Francis or any other, in adopting the strictest discipline of perfection, is called upon to stifle the natural feelings of the heart. Grace does not destroy nature, it perfects it; but corrupt nature to be perfected must be chastened and restrained.

Yet did Francis really feel this parting as a sacrifice? Was not he a saint? And the saints have hard hearts. It is false. The hearts of the saints are the most like to our Lord's own heart, and the Heart of Jesus is the tenderest and most loving of all hearts. St. Paul makes it his bitterest reproach against certain wicked men that they were "without affection"—*sine affectione*. The Son of Mary was not so, the Mother of Jesus was not so, St. Francis was not so. Far otherwise. A close copy of our Lord Jesus Christ in everything, in nothing did he resemble his Divine model more closely than in the sweetness and tenderness of his loving heart.

True sanctity is always amiable, and never was saint more amiable than St. Francis. Selfishness in all its forms and under all its disguises—and in all sin there is selfishness more or less ugly, more or less base—selfishness it is, and sin, that disgust and sadden, while sanctity consoles and attracts. For sanctity is the emptying-out of self and putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. *Exinanivit semetipsum. Induimini Dominum Jesum Christum*. Now this emptying-out of self, when perfect and perpetual, is that Poverty which St. Francis wooed and wedded as his

bride. Shame and suffering were her dowry. Poverty, shame, suffering—these were the portion of his choice. Poverty for the love of Jesus “Who, being rich, for our sake became poor”—shame for the love of Jesus who, “having joy set before Him, chose the cross, despising the shame”—suffering for the love of Jesus, who, “that He might sanctify us by His own blood, suffered” (Heb. XIII. 12).

For the love of Jesus. Yes, the heart is emptied out only to be filled. The heart is made to love the Infinite Good and the more perfectly it is detached from the things that may attract it by some tiny particle of apparent good, the more impetuously does it yearn with all its affections after the only object worthy of its love. Hence that consuming love, incomprehensible utterly to us in our coldness and sinfulness, wherein the great heart of St. Francis, nay, almost his physical frame, his entire being, was ravished and dissolved. He could only love the little Child of Bethlehem; he could only glory in the cross of Christ Jesus crucified. “Jesus my Love is crucified” was the plaint of his soul. His constant study and pastime were to ponder on the passion of Jesus, and his compassion was like that of her who stood by the cross. Like to hers in kind, though of course immeasurably lower in degree; yet how immeasurably higher it was than aught that our frozen hearts can conceive, God wished to betray to us in part by the mystery of the stigmata of St. Francis which the Church commemorates by a special festival in her Calendar.

From that rocky crest of the Apennines, Mount

Alvernia, whereon he had not prayed like Moses on Mount Sinai, "Lord, show me Thy glory," but "Lord, show me Thy shame," and whereon he had suffered such great sorrow for the shame and torments of his crucified Lord that he himself was, not only in soul but in body, mystically crucified with Him—from that mount of pilgrimage Francis descended, not again like Moses from that other mountain with the Law graven by God's finger on two tables of stone, but bearing in his mortified flesh, traced there also by the finger of God, the sacred scars of crucifixion, symbols and mementoes of the new law of love. If Zachary had put to him the prophetic question, "What are these wounds in thy hand?" *he* might give with truth that strange answer which seems so sorrowfully untrue on the lips of Him who was wounded for our sins: "With these I was wounded in the house of them who loved me". The Stigmata of St. Francis were indeed wounds of love, inflicted by the loving hand of Jesus to whose love he had given himself all. Oh! how unspeakably close and intimate must have been that union of love which the Heavenly Bridegroom sealed with such a seal!

Yes, St. Francis had indeed given himself all, all, to God. Yet not himself alone. For this seraphic ardour, this lifelong ecstasy of love, this existence so preternatural, so ethereal, that it might seem to be placed here by mistake while its proper place would have been heaven—this unearthly life was led on this gross earth of ours by no austere recluse of the desert whose feet for long years had ceased to walk in the paths of men. No, this is a saint loving and beloved

of many, living and toiling in the midst of us. This is not the voice of one crying in the wilderness, but of one conversing familiarly and winningly in the towns and hamlets and along the country roads, meek and humble and tender-hearted, for was he not the dear and faithful disciple of Him of the meek and humble Heart round whom even the timid little children used to cluster affectionately as "He went about, doing good to all?"

Francis also went about, doing good to all, and gaining the hearts of young and old. This very tenderness of heart was part of the blessed spell which God made use of to draw souls to Himself by drawing them first around Francis. And how many souls has Francis thus given to God besides his own! For his own heart could not hold love enough to content his love. There was a battle in him between Humility and Zeal. Humility urged him to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling in the secure solitude of prayer and penance, whilst Zeal bade him join action to contemplation and strive to win back to Jesus the souls for which Jesus died. Zeal triumphed, and Humility did not suffer from her defeat. St. Clare thus interpreted for her father and guide God's will in this regard, confirming the prophecy of the leper whom early in his course he had nursed and cured and then sent to Heaven, and who from Heaven said to him—"Go forth and preach; blessed be thy words and works; many souls shall be saved through thee". And forth he went, preaching Jesus crucified by word and work, and many souls were saved through him. Not alone the countless

souls whom he allured to virtue and to Heaven by his own preaching and prayers and by the silent sway of his apostolic heart. Not alone those whom he sanctified as it were by personal contact, and for whom life spent near him must have seemed like that evening walk to Emmaus when the hearts of the Disciples burned within them as Jesus talked with them by the way. Many souls indeed he thus gave to God. But one man can do so little, one voice is heard over so scanty a space, one life is so short. But what if St. Francis had traversed all regions and had lived on, doing good until now? He *has* traversed all regions, and he *has* lived on, even until now. He lives and works through those whom he trained in the school of the evangelical counsels and formed into a Religious Order perpetuated ever since in the Church of Christ. This is the First Order of St. Francis, the seraphic Order of Friars Minor which God blessed from the beginning with such marvellous fruitfulness that the third year saw St. Francis's twelve companions already multiplied into sixty monasteries: and ten years later the second General Chapter gathered together 5000 Religious. And this was nothing to their after development when in every town and village of the Old World, in every colony and half-formed settlement of the New, in all pagan lands where there was admittance for missionary or martyr, there the son of St. Francis was sure to be "about his father's business".

So for six hundred years and more St. Francis has toiled and suffered for God through his children, the members of that Order, rich in its poverty and in its

humility illustrious, which under its Father's blessing has given such devoted service to God and His Church; which has given to the Church great theologians like our Duns Scotus, the triumphant champion of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and ascetic poets like the Blessed Jacopone da Todi, for whom is claimed the glory of the "Stabat Mater"; which has given to the Church popes like Sixtus V and cardinals like the venerable Francis Ximenes: Ximenes, one of the grandest characters that light up the sombre pages of history—Ximenes, as consummate a statesman as Richelieu and at the same time as holy a bishop as St. Charles Borromeo—Ximenes as munificent a patron of learning as Lorenzo de Medici, and withal in his highest as in his lowest estate an humble and mortified son of St. Francis—Prime Minister of Ferdinand and Isabella, Viceroy of the great Emperor Charles V, Regent and Primate of Spain, and yet a saint.

Of canonized saints also the Order of St. Francis has given to the Church of God on earth and in heaven many more like St. Bonaventure, St. Joseph of Cupertino, St. Bernardino of Sienna, and that most popular of saints, Anthony of Padua, and, above all, the queen of Franciscan saints, St. Clare. She it was, that maiden of Assisi, young, beautiful and high-born, who was chosen by God and his seraphic servant to be foundress of the Second Order of St. Francis, called from her name "Poor Clares". This is another great gift from St. Francis to God; for, remember, we are still answering that first question "What has Francis of Assisi given to God?"

He gave to God his spiritual daughter Clare, and with her all the bands of holy Virgins who in the innumerable convents of her Order have led, and are leading at this hour, and will lead until the last Poor Clare shall have gained her lily and her crown, secret happy lives of heavenly contemplation and angelic purity amidst privations and austerities beyond the endurance not only of their sex but of their nature—austerities not needed by themselves for expiation or preservation, yet needed to appease God's anger against a wicked world that shrinks from the penance which it needs.

But St. Francis knew that in our Father's house there are many mansions, and that "all do not receive this word but they to whom it is given"; whereas not to a chosen few but to all are those other words spoken, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments". He wished, therefore, to help *all* to carry more cheerfully the sweet yoke and the light burden which often, through our own fault, seem to us bitter and heavy. And accordingly—so we are told in that wonderful little book the "*Fioretti di San Francesco*" or "Little Flowers of Saint Francis," one of the purest and most exquisite Italian classics and therefore untranslatable, but nevertheless turned into admirable English by Lady Georgiana Fullerton, of holy memory—we read there that one day the holy Father Francis preached with such fervour that the inhabitants of the town wished to follow him out of devotion. But St. Francis would not allow them, saying, "Do not be in such haste. You need not leave your homes. I will tell you what you must do

to save your souls." Thereupon he founded the Third Order for the salvation of all; and, leaving them much consoled and well disposed to do penance, he went from thence. Thus did St. Francis yearn to give *all* souls in all states as a gift to the Lord who had made them all and who had bought them (though his own) at a great price. And as the First Order and the Second Order provided the means of salvation and sanctification for the few fortunate souls whether among the brethren of Jesus or the daughters of Mary who by circumstances and disposition and the special graces of God might be enabled to shelter themselves in the haven of Religion: so, in establishing the secular Confraternity of the Third Order, St. Francis in his universal charity consulted for the mass of Christians whose appointed lot it is to be *in* the world if not *of* it, and to whom social ties and duties and other signs of God's will interdict any nearer approach to that standard of perfection, "Sell all thou hast and follow Me".

In all the good wrought by all these instruments of good, in all the graces dispensed through all these channels of grace, St. Francis of Assisi has his part. He has worked, he is working, for a Master who overlooks no service and who gives abundantly in return for whatever little is given to Him with ever so little love. But with generous souls, oh! that Master is generous. And if He assures a recompense for even a cup of cold water given in His name, what for a soul?—a soul given to Him in life and then for all eternity; one's own soul, first of all, the only soul whose lot is in the hands of each. But what for

a soul like the seraphic soul of Francis? What for all the souls, the least precious of them more precious in the mind of God than all the gold and diamonds of a thousand worlds, and these given in myriads to God through the labours of the holy Institutes which St. Francis gave to the Church for ever, and which she uses so well in applying the fruits of Redemption to generation after generation of souls over all the earth?

Over all the earth and here at home. Yes, St. Francis has long been at work among us. Hardly was the Order established when the Friars Minor made their way into the little Island which must then have seemed so far away from Rome and the mountain valleys of Umbria. And mark the epoch of Irish History at which St. Francis was born into this sad and sinful world. Just two years after the death of our Patriot Saint, Laurence O'Toole, and ten years after the Second Henry sailed across St. George's Channel. Poor Ireland has had need ever since of the Patron Saint of Poverty. Might not she be named the St. Francis of the Nations, "the poor little one of Christ," as St. Francis called himself with a meek contempt—*Poverello di Cristo*—the martyr land of the poverty and faith of Jesus, marked (she also) with the blessed stigmas of her crucified Saviour. Poverty and patience and loyalty to the faith of the Holy Church—these are the virtues which St. Francis dying urged upon his children. These are the virtues which Catholic Ireland preaches, and which by the grace of God, who turns to His own account the malice of men, Catholic Ireland has

practised. In this, too, St. Francis has had his share, and God will reward for it him and his. St. Francis, Saint of the poor and suffering, pray for Ireland.

And now that we have attempted some answer to that question, "What has Francis of Assisi given to God?" we have also begun the answer to that further question "What has God given to St. Francis?" That which the creature gives is the Creator's gift before it can be given. Our very desire of giving back what God has first given to us is itself a gift of God. Yet He deigns to receive with gratitude that which was always His own, which it would be robbery to keep, which it is not generosity but justice to restore. With those who go beyond justice God goes beyond generosity. "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow Me." *Thou shalt have treasure in heaven.* Yes, this phrase of our text we have reserved till now: for this is what God gives to St. Francis—Heaven, a Saint's share of Heaven, the Heaven due to such a Saint. *Treasure in Heaven.* Every little act of love done for God, every little toil endured for God, every little sacrifice made for God, every little pain borne for God on earth, toil and sacrifice and pain made bearable at the instant and even delightful by the grace of God, and the hope and foretaste of Heaven. But this is true for every one of us. And if for those who have done least for God, and toiled and suffered and loved least, if for the lowest in Heaven, Heaven be what eye has never seen and heart has never conceived—if *our* Heaven be such, what is the Heaven of St. Francis? *Thou*

shalt have treasure in Heaven—come, follow Me!
“Follow Me not through My poverty only and My toils and My humiliations and My sufferings, but follow Me into the joys and glories of Heaven—follow Me whithersoever I go. O good and faithful servant, because thou hast given Me all the little thou hadst to give, I will give to thee, not all that I have to give but all that I can give thee—because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.”

Nor did God wait for Heaven to place his good and faithful servant, Francis, over many things. He was placed in power over the material world, over the birds of the air, over the wild beasts of the desert, better still over his own heart and all its passions and desires, over the hearts of his fellow-men. He softened the hardest hearts, he enlightened the darkest minds, he tamed the fiercest, he warmed the coldest. He might have made his Master's words his own: “I am come to cast fire upon earth and what will I but that it be kindled?” The mysterious symbols of his Saviour's love which it was given to him to bear outwardly were less marvellous than his inner gifts of sanctity. But though “the Kingdom of God is within” and “it is good to hide the King's secret,” the King Himself may divulge His secrets, and He is wont to exalt them who humble themselves like our humble Saint. Enshrined from the first in the innermost heart of the Church, first of all the St. Francis, the “St. Francis” who is meant when no distinctive title is added, there is hardly a name in the Calendar of the canonized servants of God

crowned with a brighter halo or pursued with the homage of so many hearts. Especially dear he has always been to those dearest favourites of the Heart of Jesus, the virtuous poor; and he was the patron saint of many of those among the saints who have had to labour for their crown since he had gained his. That is now some seven hundred years ago; and still St. Francis is almost as intimately known and revered as lovingly as he was by Brother Leo or the gentle St. Clare. He is not forgotten like the great men of his day who would have looked down upon him with scorn, could they have adverted to his existence. Even of human fame what tribute has the most famous amongst them to compare with that eleventh Canto of the "Paradise" of Dante, where the sublimest of all poets but one has deemed the story of Francis a fit theme for the austere grandeur of his genius? In painting also, the early Umbrian school of Italian Art is consecrated by its associations with the Seraph of Assisi. Again, as the adventurous discoverer of unknown regions may name them after the monarch whose munificence has encouraged the enterprise, even so the missionaries of St. Francis have hallowed with his name more than one spot on which they were the first to plant the standard of the Cross. Thus the very goldseeker of California honours the Patriarch's memory without thinking of it: for one of the future, if not actual, capitals of the world bears his name, and near to San Francisco is Santa Clara,—Francis and Clare.

Mere human fame, however, would but darken the

lustre of the Blessed. The accidental glory of the Saints is not increased by any such barren remembrance, but by this, that their memory is a cheering beacon to the wayfarer who is still far from the home which *they* have reached. It is for this that their memory lives in the heart of the Church. The Church of God never forgets, as God Himself forgets never. She thinks of all her children—those who have finished their journey and are safe at home, but more of those who are still toiling along their way. She holds us all in her heart. Her heart is large enough for all : for her heart throbs with the life and with the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. And to-day she bids us allow this joyful commemoration of the virtues and glories of her great St. Francis to be for us what it is meant to be, the source and occasion of many graces. We may use it specially as a reminder and as a protest—as a reminder of Gospel maxims we are all too apt to ignore in practice, and as a protest against the worldliness and paganism of this respectable purse-proud nineteenth century with whose spirit we may all, even in the most secure vocations, be partially infected. In one of the most brilliant organs of educated opinion in these countries I noticed some years ago what would be styled a “clever article” on the Dead Virtues. And what, think you, were these Dead Virtues but the Evangelic Counsels of Perfection, Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience? These virtues dead! Yes, they *are* dead for *them*, for they themselves are dead. They are dead for all who are dead to supernatural life, who are alien to the faith and the spirit of our Lord

and Saviour Jesus Christ. But they are *not* dead, they are *living* in the living Church of Jesus, for "Jesus being risen from the dead dieth now no more," and His Word passeth not away, and His counsels and His commands endure.

St. Francis has his message for each: for one to cling yet closer to God and therefore to keep farther away from the occasions of sin—for another to bear more cheerfully the crosses and hardships of life, remembering that such crosses and hardships are not real sorrows or afflictions, but only the little flowers of Calvary to be gathered with joy and laid with love upon the altar of Mary the Mother of Sorrows and Comfortress of the Afflicted. But St. Francis's message for all of us is to try henceforth to love and serve better our good God whom even St. Francis himself did not love or serve too well.

No, not only in the important crises which occur in some lives, but in the difficulties little or great which beset the daily course of all lives, in our temptations, in our trials, in the ordinary petty sacrifices which Duty constantly imposes, *we* must never—no, never!—*turn away sad*, but turn always, even in our sadness, to Jesus, refusing Him nothing that He has a right to expect from us. He does not expect too much. He knows how poor we are and how weak. But at least He expects us to abstain from the evil things He has forbidden and to do the good things He has commanded. He expects us to rejoice generously, and to help when we can, in all the good done by others, however much their calling may differ from ours. And, above all, He expects

us, according to our graces and our circumstances and the allotted duties of our various states in life,—He expects us to serve Him our Lord and our God and to save our souls. And now (to make the last words of St. Clare's Testament our last words also) let us bow our knees before the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in order that, through the merits and prayers of the glorious Virgin Mary His Mother, and of our seraphic Father St. Francis and of all the Saints, our Lord who has given us a good commencement may give us the accomplishment, and may give us also in time final perseverance, and, after a happy death—Heaven!

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 St. Francis of Assisi, the seraph-saint of love,
 Christ's glorious *poverello*, fixed all his hopes above.
 He cared not for the sorrows or the shame and pain of life,
 And of his wounds he recked not in the ardour of the strife.
 "My God, my all!" he murmured, and yearned for nought beside;
 He lived on love of Jesus, and 'twas of love he died.

His heart was large and tender, he loved the beasts and birds;
 His twittering sister-swallows listened silent to his words.
 The cruel wolf of Gobbio his gentle glance could tame,
 And to his whispered bidding obedient it became.
 Before the murderous brigand with prayers and tears he fell—
 "On thine own soul have mercy!"—and he saved that soul from hell.

St. Francis of Assisi is glorious now in Heaven,
 And e'en on earth has genius its richest tribute given
 To him the poor and lowly who only loved the Cross,
 And looked on wealth and honour as foolishness and dross.
 Brave warriors, bright maidens, soon dead, forgotten long—
 But Francis still is living in our hearts and in our song.

On the snowy heights of Dante thou, Francis, hast thy place;
 Thy *Fioretti* charm us with subtlest, rarest grace.

The pathos of thy story the poet's soul has fired,
The highest flights of Bossuet have been by thee inspired;
And Giotto, Perugino, have laid in homage meet
Their art's divinest treasures beneath thy piercèd feet.

But gentle Father Francis will bid us link his name
With those who in his footsteps to the Heart of Jesus came—
Good Brother Giles, and Bernard, the first to join the Saint,
And Juniper, and Leo, so holy and so quaint,
And all the thousand thousands who have fasted, preached, and
prayed

In the brown Franciscan habit—ne'er may its glory fade!

Great Saint! on earth thou madest meek Poverty thy bride,
And on the Cross with Jesus thy flesh was crucified.
May I, in coward's measure, partake thy blissful pain,
That somewhere in Christ's kingdom I too at length may reign!
To think of thee, St. Francis, is both a joy and fear,
For *I* must win that Heaven which cost *thee* not too dear.

M: R.

ST. DOMINIC.¹

(AUGUST 4.)

[A.D. 1170-1221.]

DEDECUS filii pater sine honore.—"A father without honour is the disgrace of the son." This is one of the wise sayings of that writer of the Old Testament whom we call Ecclesiasticus, or the Preacher. The Order of Friars Preachers cannot take to themselves this rebuke of their inspired namesake. The children of St. Dominic are certainly not liable to the charge of leaving their founder and father unhonoured. If they wished to do so, the Church would not let them.

For the Church is a mother, and mothers have long memories. God Himself has never expressed His love for His poor human creatures more emphatically than when in the forty-ninth chapter of His great prophet Isaiah He puts that pathetic question : "Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb?" And then, although He expects a vehement "Never!" as answer to the question, He goes on to suppose the impossible, and, passing beyond that uttermost test of unforgetting love, He says : "And if she should forget, yet will not I for-

¹This somewhat unconventional panegyric was spoken in the Dominican Church, Newry, 4 August, 1901.



Fra Angelico, pinxit]

ST. DOMINIC

[Photo.: Alinari]

get thee ". This divine hyperbole rests upon the supposition that the mother's heart never forgets. Now, the Church is a mother, and in her motherly heart she cherishes for ever a loving remembrance of her children who have once enshrined themselves there. To-day she holds festival in honour of one of her most glorious sons. We, the children of the Church, are gathered together in this beautiful temple of God, and similar multitudes of the faithful throng hundreds and thousands of churches to-day all the world over ; we and they are assembled this fourth day of August to revere the memory of a man who died nearly seven hundred years ago. Which of the world's heroes is remembered so long? No ; St. Dominic is not forgotten. This is St. Dominic's Day, and, lest you, dear brethren, should forget him, his devoted sons who labour here amongst you have bestowed on me the welcome privilege of reminding you of what St. Dominic was in the Church militant on earth and of what he must now be in the Church triumphant in Heaven.

I have just said that it is nearly seven hundred years since St. Dominic finished his work on earth. He lived and toiled seven centuries ago. Let us bring home to ourselves the long space of time that this phrase covers by fixing upon some events in secular history that happened about the same period. St. Dominic was born in the ancestral castle of the Guzmans, near Calaroga, a Spanish village midway between the towns of Osma and Aranda, in Old Castile ; and he was born there in 1170, the year in which St. Thomas of Canterbury was martyred by

the minions of Henry II, that same English King who, two years later, began what is called the Conquest of Ireland. Strongbow and St. Dominic were thus contemporaries. How far back in the past all that seems now!—more than three hundred years before the first Protestant King of England murdered with forms of law two of his six wives. Think of all that has happened to our own dear country since that ominous date in her history, 1172, and all that has happened, year by year, since then through all the nations of the earth, generation after generation. And through every year and day of all those centuries the work of St. Dominic has been going on, through the unwearying zeal of his sons labouring in every corner of God's Church for the greater glory of God and for the souls for whom Jesus died.

But let us first take a hurried glance at what St. Dominic did for God in his own lifetime. Even if the actual course of his life were altogether hidden from us, the fact that God chose him to be the founder of such an institute as the illustrious Order of Friars Preachers would be enough to justify our reverence for his memory. "By their fruits you shall know them." But Dominic is by no means one of those famous saints who at first disappoint us when we come to study the meagre record of their lives. His personal character and career are grand and noble in themselves, and, fortunately, they have been well depicted for us in this language that we speak, the language of heretical England. And, as we are keeping his feast here in St. Catherine's Church—the only Irish church of his Order which is dedicated to

God under the invocation of that great woman, St. Dominic's most glorious daughter, St. Catherine of Siena—it is proper to recall the fact that the worthiest biography of the holy patriarch in English is written by another of his daughters, Augusta Theodosia Drane, in religion Mother Frances Raphael, who died a few years ago ; one of the most richly gifted women of our time, or of any time, whose sacred verse is true poetry, whose edifying tales are bright and graceful literature, and whose solidly learned tome, " Christian Schools and Scholars," is one of the greatest books ever written by a woman, and would not be unworthy of the most erudite of even the *sons* of St. Dominic. Her " History of St. Dominic, Founder of the Friars Preachers," almost does justice to its noble theme, in that mingling of grace and strength, of tenderness and dignity, which are characteristic of St. Dominic himself.

I wish I could borrow from this splendid tribute of filial piety even the most rapid summary of the saint's life. Like the lives of most saints, it began with that fundamental, comprehensive, and far-reaching grace—a good mother. This holy woman has been beatified in our time, and the children of her child can now pray to her as Blessed Jane of Aza. In this respect Dominic was like the great St. Augustine, and he was like him in this circumstance also that the Manichean heresy affected his early manhood—but in a very different way. You remember the sinful, wandering years of St. Augustine's youth, which he himself has recorded so humbly in the book of his " Confessions "; and you remember how St. Monica's

tears and prayers were at last rewarded by her son's conversion. There is no corresponding epoch, no conversion, in the life of St. Dominic—no dark background to make the picture stand out more brilliantly by the contrast. He gave himself to God from the first, and corresponded generously with all the graces that God lavishly poured out upon him in order to fit him for the mighty work he was to do. His connexion with the Manichean heretics, which linked him a moment ago with the son of St. Monica, was not that of a dupe, or an accomplice, as with the older saint, but that of an apostolic preacher to win them back to Catholic truth. The heresy of the Albigenses, which ravished Languedoc and Southern France, was the last remnant of Manicheism, and its extirpation occupied the first seven years of St. Dominic's mature life. All his childhood and youth had been spent in piety and sacred studies, for God meant him to found an Order that would labour for the salvation of souls by the ministry of the Word, and it was fitting that the founder of such an Order should himself be trained and disciplined in all the functions to which his followers were to be devoted. St. Dominic knew that true apostolic preaching was what the most illustrious of his sons, St. Thomas of Aquino, was afterwards to define it, *contemplata tradere*, to deliver to others the truths that we have first made our own by profound and devout contemplation. And so it is expressly stated that St. Dominic never preached without preparing by long meditation and prayer.

One voice, however, no matter how eloquent or

powerful, and no matter how assiduously employed, one voice could reach but few out of the myriad souls to whom St. Dominic yearned to bring the tidings of salvation. Gradually, therefore, and almost unconsciously, he gathered round him disciples whose successors would be multiplied through countless generations, and whose sound would go forth to the ends of the earth and till the end of time. The wonderful progress of the new Order which received its name of Friars Preachers informally, and, as we say, by accident, from the great Pope Innocent III., the attractive sanctity of some of St. Dominic's first companions, the miracles by which God confirmed, and the trials by which He sanctified the young institute: it is utterly impossible to enter into such particulars now.

The saint's individual spirit and character may be summed up in the statement of one of his early biographers: "In the heart of St. Dominic, next to the sovereign love of God, three other loves reigned paramount—the love of the Blessed Virgin, the love of souls, and the love of the Cross". He spent himself for souls; he was eager to suffer. His fine constitution—and, like most of the saints, especially the most laborious and mortified, his earnest soul was lodged in a hale and vigorous body—even his splendid constitution could not endure for ever his extraordinary toils and extraordinary austerities; and he had only reached his fifty-first year when he died at Bologna, in Italy, on the sixth of August, 1221.

The day of a saint's death is his heavenly birthday. But this is only the fourth of August; why do we not

wait for the anniversary of St. Dominic's departure? Because to-morrow is the feast of our Lady of the Snow, and the next day is the feast of our Lord's Transfiguration; and therefore St. Dominic yields place to our Blessed Lady and her Divine Son, and we forestall his feast by two days, giving thanks to God for all that His great servant was during his lifetime on earth, and much more for all that he must be now and will be for ever in the glory of Heaven.

For his work, his power and influence did not end with his sweet, calm, and joyful death on that Friday noon at Bologna. His work has gone on ever since, and will go on as long as this earth continues to be such as it is at present, a place of probation for the saving and sanctifying of souls. In this sense the dead may live on, both for good and for evil.

The evil that men do lives after them.

The good is oft interred with their bones.

No, the good lives after them also. What a fearful thing for a man to leave behind him in the world, a wicked work of genius—poem, or history, or fictitious tale, or philosophical treatise—which will go on, year after year, poisoning and killing the souls of its readers. But, on the other hand, how magnificent a grace to be used by God to weave thoughts together into a book that will for ever help souls to pass safely through the trials and temptations of life! To take at once the highest example, the holiest of uninspired books, how great must be the continual increase of accidental glory in heaven for the humble monk who wrote "The Imitation of Christ" five or six hundred years ago! But what is even this, compared to

St. Dominic's share in the merits of all the priests and theologians, all the preachers and martyrs, all the canonized and beatified saints, and all the holy nuns that he has given to the Church through the Dominican Order? Even in that department of sacred literature from which I have just taken an illustration, what great things have been done by the sons of St. Dominic, especially by his greatest son, Thomas Aquinas, not only in his stupendous, superhuman "Summa," but in his Eucharistic hymns, so miraculously perfect in the theological accuracy of their diction and in the spontaneous sweetness of their rhythm.

These are only a few samples of the sacred triumphs achieved by the religious institute that looks up to St. Dominic as its author and founder. In the glory of his sons St. Dominic has a father's share. No wonder that on this day they invite us to join with them in doing honour to such a father. To leave such a father unhonoured would indeed be a disgrace. *Dedecus filii pater sine honore.* Far, far be such shameful ingratitude from these children of St. Dominic who have allowed me to attempt his praise in my dear old native town.

There are many, who, if they were placed in my present circumstances, would deem it more judicious and more dignified to descend from this pulpit without betraying the personal feelings which the spot inspires. But I should accuse myself of want of heart if I passed away like a stranger. For me it would be cold affectation to pretend to forget that I am speaking now not many yards from the house in which I was born. Little did I dream in those far-

off days when my brother and I made our way to school in Corry Square, near the present Convent of Mercy, little did I dream that the row of very humble cottages which at this point of our daily journey lined this side of the street should one day be replaced by this exquisite church, so perfect in all its appointments and adornments, with its noble spire rising against the green hill behind. When the holy silence of the Sunday noon used to be broken by the bell of the Protestant church yonder, booming across the Clanrye and the marsh behind our garden (now transformed into populous streets), it seemed to a little Catholic of that remote date to symbolize the loud self-assertion of Protestant ascendancy ; and he never imagined that in fifty years it would be drowned by the magnificent peal of the Catholic Cathedral, which makes itself heard for miles around, from Violet Hill to Killeevy.

As that renovated and completed Cathedral will be the most lasting memento of your present beloved Bishop, so this church of St. Catherine and the devoted ministry attached to it may be counted the most permanent legacy bequeathed to the people of Newry by the Dominican Bishop of Dromore, John Pius Leahy, of saintly and amiable memory. That name alone, dear brethren, would make you grateful to the saint whose feast we are keeping. For Dr. Leahy was to the end a true Dominican. Once preaching in his presence for some charitable object in a rural parish of this diocese, I ventured to give expression to a little of our feelings towards him ; but I could do this only by linking his name with

certain Dominican names that were sure, I knew, to sound sweetly in his ears. I said that the great Order of Friars Preachers was dear to the people and priests of Dromore, not so much for the sake of St. Dominic himself and all that his sons had done to spread and perpetuate among the faithful that Queen of Devotions, the Holy Rosary; nor for the sake of Fra Angelico and all that he did for Christian art; nor even for the sake of the Fra Angelico of Christian science, the angelic doctor, Thomas Aquinas, patron saint of students and prince of theologians; nor yet for the sake of Bartholomew de Las Casas, the heroic champion of the slaves; nor, to come nearer to our own time, for the sake of the Friar Preacher who, in the middle of the century which is just over, had awakened by his fervid eloquence Paris and all France; nor even for the sake of the Lacordaire of Ireland, the Dominican who had made the name of Burke illustrious for the second time in the annals of oratory—for none of all these, but for the sake of the Bishop whom the Dominican Order had given to Dromore, and whom Dromore would love and revere more deeply with every year that he was spared to her. And so she did; and he was spared to her long.

You, dear brethren, will not soon forget that mitred son of St. Dominic. But, fresh as his memory is amongst you, separated from the new Bishop and shepherd of your souls,¹ whose presence here to-day shows his love for St. Dominic while it

¹ The Most Rev. Henry O'Neill, D.D., Bishop of Dromore. The singularly holy and amiable priest alluded to in the next sentence but one, Father Carlin, died prematurely soon after.

prevents us from expressing ours for himself—separated from the present time only by the too short episcopate of Dr. M'Givern, Dr. Leahy is nevertheless not the latest of St. Dominic's representatives among the bishops of Ireland. The Bishop of Cork, Dr. O'Callaghan, has also ministered among you as prior of this very church. Nay, to take a long leap backward, not only the latest but the earliest of Irish Dominican bishops has a certain claim upon you, not so close and intimate a claim indeed, for it is only through his happening to bear the same name as the zealous administrator of this parish. The Dominican Order can hardly have won a place in the Irish Episcopacy before 1230, and in that year, less than ten years after St. Dominic's death, Gervase O'Carlin, O.P., was Bishop of Derry. This fact alone goes far to prove that the new Order was already well established in our country very soon after it was founded ; and indeed Dominican bishops sat in three or four Irish Sees about the early date we have mentioned.

Catholic Ireland certainly owes a vast debt of gratitude to St. Dominic. His apostolic heart did not overlook or despise the little island that lay far away to the north-west. How far away it must have seemed in those days before the aids and appliances of modern travel were dreamt of ! And yet to Ireland the Dominican Fathers hastened almost before they were solemnly banded together, never, come weal, come woe, never to part from her. Through the dark days of persecution the sons of St. Dominic braved danger and death in order to remain

among the true-hearted people of Catholic Ireland, to minister to their spiritual wants, and to keep up their courage and their hope. When the clouds passed over, when the sun shone out again, the white robe of the Dominican showed itself more boldly, and the devotion and generosity of the faithful enabled them to raise to the worship of God many new and beautiful churches in Dublin, Tralee, Galway, Drogheda, Dundalk, and other Irish towns—all very beautiful, but none more beautiful or more perfectly finished than this, their most northern station in our island.

A few moments ago, under the consecration of Dr. Leahy's name, I enumerated some of the historical glories of the Dominican Order, the latest of them being our own Father Thomas Burke. He was one of St. Dominic's best gifts to Ireland. By nature, and grace, and art, he was a mighty preacher of God's word. His fame belongs not to his brethren alone, but to Ireland, and Ireland will cherish it faithfully. He and Father Mathew, the apostle of temperance, are, I think, the only Irish priests of the nineteenth century who will be remembered far on into this twentieth and perhaps subsequent centuries, along with a few great bishops like Dr. Doyle and Dr. MacHale. I chanced to see two or three days ago a book which the latter of these illustrious prelates had once presented to the great Dominican, with this inscription: "From his devoted friend, the Archbishop of Tuam, to Father Burke, who has been the faithful and fearless advocate of justice to all the children of Adam by his incomparable sermons and

appeals throughout both hemispheres.”¹ Incomparable indeed, for there was no sacred orator of his time that could be compared with him. I remember hearing a distinguished Newryman, the learned, accomplished, and pious Judge O’Hagan—I remember hearing him say that of all the men he had known Father Burke was the only one whose intellectual gifts seemed to him to have reached the height of genius. This man of genius and sanctity gloried in his allegiance to the great saint whose festival we celebrate. Never was there a more loyal son of St. Dominic. Surely his ardent zeal and piety, his magnificent labours and patient sufferings, have placed him where he can pray for the land that he loved and for his brethren.

May their zealous ministry here and everywhere bear abundant fruit through all the years of this new century, of which even the youngest of you, dear brethren, cannot hope to see the end. Whatever changes may be in store for our country or our town in the coming century or centuries, may Almighty God in His loving mercy grant that we and those

¹ This is written in a copy of Dr. MacHale’s Irish translation of the Book of Genesis. In giving his translation of “Moore’s Melodies,” the great Archbishop of the West writes: “To the Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P., the faithful model of the Order of Preachers, and the eloquent expounder of the Gospel on both sides of the Atlantic, from one of the many he has laid under deep and lasting obligations by his noble and disinterested service to the Catholic Church and people.—✠ JOHN MACHALE, Archbishop of Tuam.” And then with the volume of his public Letters: “From his most obliged friend, the Archbishop of Tuam, to him who in these latter ages has faithfully illustrated the spirit of St. Dominic by his unrivalled preaching in America, as well as at home in Ireland.”

who come after us may always abide as staunch and true to the one Catholic Church of God as those who have lived before us through harder times, and have handed down to us so proudly the faith of St. Dominic and St. Catherine, of St. Brigid and St. Patrick.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

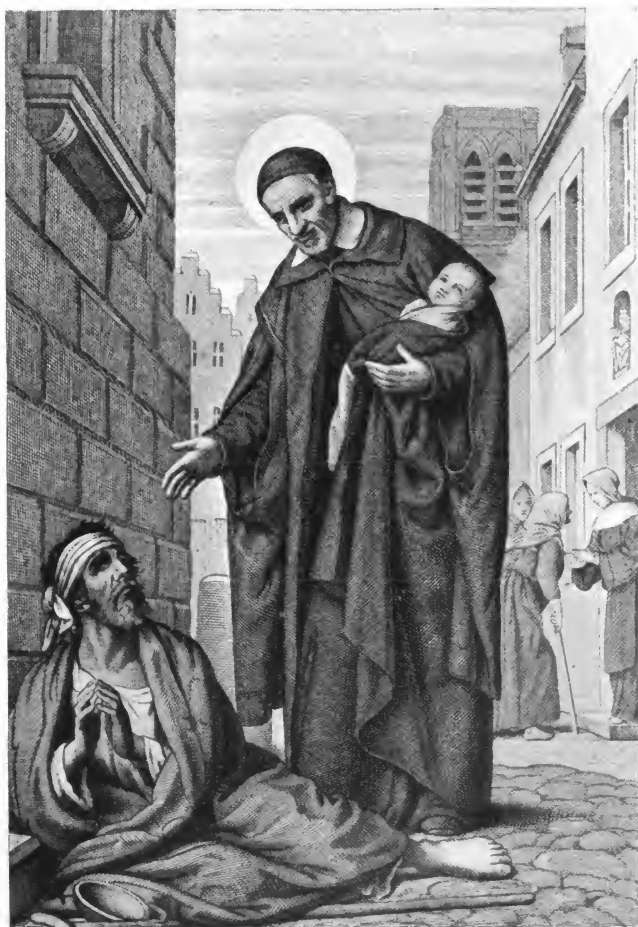
(JULY 19.)

[A.D. 1576-1660.]

EXIVIT vincens ut vinceret. "He went forth, conquering, that he might conquer." Though there is only some similarity of sound between them, I have allowed St. Vincent's name to remind me of this mystical phrase, which occurs at the beginning of the sixth chapter of the Apocalypse. Whatever it may mean *there*, it is easy to attach to it a meaning that fits it to symbolize the career of the great saint to whom our thoughts are turning.¹ Every saint that is called, like St. Vincent, to do a magnificent work for God, must go forth conquering that he may conquer. He must go forth, leaving behind him home and kindred, and often country, and always self; he must conquer himself in order that he may conquer others. He must first establish God's kingdom triumphantly in his own soul, before going forth to bring his myriads of souls under the sweet yoke of Christ.

St. Vincent did so. A long hidden life prepared him for his public life; and, like his Divine Master,

¹ I have indeed applied it elsewhere in this book more fully and with still greater appositeness to two stages in the career of St. Francis Xavier.



J. Sellegast, pinxit]

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

he was always eager, amidst the glorious toils of his public life, to sink back into the hidden life of humility, self-abnegation, and prayer. For he took to himself that warning of St. Benedict: "Unless you love silence, solitude, prayer, and purity of heart, you will never do anything of worth for the service of God".

Anything of worth. But, oh! what countless and what various works of the highest worth Vincent de Paul was destined to do for God! Speaking under his own roof,¹ in the midst of his Irish children, I must not dare to attempt even an outline of his story. Fortunately that story has been well told, in English, by an excellent man and an accomplished writer² who, since his conversion to the Catholic Faith, has been for more than forty years identified with the great Irish College of the Foreign Missions, which has recently (thank God) been confided to the care of the Sons of St. Vincent; with whom indeed from its first beginning it had some connexion through its Founder, the simple and saintly Father Hand.

The life of our Saint was the very opposite to commonplace or monotonous; and, when we follow its interesting and varied vicissitudes, we cannot help being struck by what we in our short-sightedness call the easy and natural way in which one thing led on to another, and the calmness and at the same time earnestness and thoroughness with which God's servant took each duty as it came in its turn. For instance, in those first humble beginnings, to which,

¹ At St. Vincent's College, Castleknock, near Dublin.

² Mr. Henry Bedford.

when he was the trusted and honoured councillor of Queen Anne of Austria, Father Vincent was fond of referring back, not hiding but parading the lowliness of his birth, we may be sure that, when a boy, he herded the sheep and swine on his father's small holding with the same diligence that he soon after gave to his books when he was at school with the Franciscans of Dax. The unusual length of the time that he devoted to the study of theology before and after Priesthood helped to qualify him for that authority which God wished to give him in after years over such vast numbers of his brethren in the sacred ministry. Even the romantic episode of his captivity in Africa seems a sort of forecast of his blessed work among the galley slaves. But with such a mission before him as his was to be, what more unpromising position could be imagined than the office of tutor in the great family of the De Gondis? Yet God made use of the influence which our holy priest thus acquired over the pious Countess of Joigny to facilitate many of his undertakings and especially the founding of the Sisters of Charity.

However, I am not going to break my word. I am not going to describe and hardly even to name the extraordinary number of religious institutions and works of zeal in which St. Vincent had more than a foremost part. But it is impossible to cast even the most superficial glance over the history of the Church and of the world in his time and ever since his time without being convinced that Vincent de Paul was one of the most important and most effective instruments that God's Providence has

ever made use of in applying to His poor human creatures the graces of Redemption—one of those high and rare heroes of Christianity who may be singled out, even from among the canonized servants of God, singled out and grouped apart as having wielded over their fellow-men the widest, the deepest, and the most lasting influence.

That influence, in the case of our Saint, was by no means confined to his living personality—to all those stupendous and diversified labours which overcrowded his own long life of eighty-five of the fullest possible years. Missions, retreats, asylums, orphanages, hospitals, convents, colleges, seminaries—heresy combated, abuses and scandals rooted out, parishes reformed, dioceses supplied with good priests and bishops, and saved from worldly and unworthy pastors: what an immense good wrought for souls in every order of society, what splendid succour for the Church at a most perilous time, these words call up before the minds of those who are acquainted, however vaguely, with the general outlines of St. Vincent's career!

But that career, as I was beginning to say a moment ago, did not end with the Saint's death in the year 1600. Of many another also, but above all of founders of religious orders, the famous lines are emphatically false; the good that they do lives after them and is *not* "interred with their bones". The good that St. Vincent accomplished during his lifetime has lived after him, has spread and developed most marvellously, is this instant at work in and through thousands and thousands of souls, and will

continue his beneficent mission on earth as long as this world of probation endures.

In one of his earliest conferences to his infant Congregation of the Mission, Mr. Vincent (as he was then called) quoted St. Augustine as saying that God causes pious parents to see in Heaven the good their children are doing on earth ; and then, humbly associating his first disciples with himself in all the merit of his work, the holy man exclaimed : “ In like manner what consolation and joy shall *we* experience when it shall please God to let us see our Congregation doing well, abounding in good works, observing faithfully the appointed order of time and occupation, and living in the practice of those virtues which our good example has set before them ! ”

That consolation and joy are St. Vincent's at this moment on his glorious throne in Heaven. Think of all the innumerable multitudes of souls whose eternal destinies are year by year, generation after generation, affected powerfully for good by the ministrations of St. Vincent's devoted sons in so many centres of spiritual life over all the world-wide Church—in so many ecclesiastical seminaries like All Hallows, Drumcondra ; in so many churches like St. Peter's, Phibsborough ; in so many colleges like St. Vincent's, Castleknock. And to this incalculable accumulation of good works add the special work that gives to them their title of Priests of the Mission. But far more than what they *do*, think of what they *are*.

And then St. Vincent's spiritual daughters, the Sisters of Charity, first of their name and even first

of their kind. Yes, this glory was reserved to St. Vincent de Paul, though in his own time an attempt had been made to forestall him by no less a man than that fascinating saint, Francis de Sales—who, by the way, showed what *he* thought of St. Vincent by choosing him before all the most holy and learned bishops and priests of France to be the spiritual guide and guardian of his religious daughters. The very name that the Bishop of Geneva gave to these—Daughters of the Visitation—was intended to signify their primary duty of visiting the sick; but other prelates could not yet be brought to accept this startling innovation, and St. Francis with heroic humility submitted his judgment and modified substantially his darling project, allowing his Visitation Nuns to remain till this day enclosed within the sacred precincts of the cloister and leaving to his friend, Vincent de Paul, the glory of being in this sense the founder of all those modern Sisterhoods of Charity and of Mercy who go forth to relieve the wants and pains of the sick, suffering, and dying poor, carrying the holy atmosphere of the convent with them, just as our Guardian Angels carry their heaven with them while watching over the human souls that are entrusted to their care. These, too, “go forth conquering that they may conquer”. They leave for a time their beloved seclusion, conquering the timidity of their sex and the shrinking modesty of the cloistered religious, that they may go forth upon their errands of mercy, conquering prejudice, disarming enmity, often winning over the scoffer and unbeliever, and wringing from many a heart the cry:

"Blessed be God that such things are possible to weak daughters of Eve! I believe in the Holy Catholic Church".

Nay, the ever-abiding and ever-active influence of St. Vincent is not limited even to those religious bodies of which he was the father and founder and law-giver. His very name is a perennial power in God's Church. It was under the consecration of that inspiring name that, some sixty years ago, the brilliant young Professor, Frederick Ozanam, and other pious laymen, banded themselves together at Paris in an organization which now flourishes in almost every Catholic town over all the world and in many a city that is not Catholic. The Vincent de Paul Society does not merely collect the alms of the benevolent and dole them out among the poor, as it were at a respectful distance; the active members of that admirable association go themselves into the homes of the poor, or into haunts too often unworthy of the sacred name of home, and there they try to learn their real wants and to relieve them with better and more lasting help than mere almsgiving. Those of you, my dear young friends, whom God wishes to serve Him in the world, will, I trust, become in your earliest manhood zealous members of the Vincent de Paul Society.

For I have reached my last instance of the vitality, the perpetuity, of the holy and salutary sway exercised by the Saint whose feast we celebrate. There is yet another source of glory for St. Vincent—*you*. Yes, dearest children, you yourselves must form a part, and an important part, of St. Vincent's mighty tribute of souls secured for God. God's poor and

God's priests are indeed his most especial care ; but in his heart there is room for almost every kind of zeal and charity, and God's other favourites, the young, have a large share in that great, loving heart.

May all who are sheltered here under the mantle of Vincent de Paul show in their after lives, whether long or short—and God alone knows how long or how short, for certainly it is not given to every Castleknock boy to come back to his Alma Mater fifty years after his first visit, like me to-day—may you all, dear young friends, whatever and wherever your life's work may be, prove yourselves staunch and upright Catholic Irishmen, true to your Faith, true to your country, true to the spirit and the principles in which you have been trained with such quiet and devoted zeal during your sojourn in this beautiful college which nestles securely between the old ivied castle and the grassy hill. And if one of the joys of heaven should be, as it may well be, that we shall be allowed to look back on this present stage of our existence and to trace the marvellous mercies of God in our regard throughout the course of our earthly probation, surely we shall *then* perceive that one of the very choicest of those graces, one of the strongest links in the chain of our merciful predestination, was the careful Christian training of our boyhood, for which with grateful hearts we bless and will always bless, and thank, and praise the sainted Patron of this College, Vincent de Paul.

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA.

(JULY 31.)

[A.D. 1491-1556.]

THE description of the wise man given in the thirty-ninth chapter of Ecclesiasticus applies most closely of all to those who alone are truly wise with the highest and truest wisdom, the canonized and uncanonized saints of God. "He shall show forth the discipline he hath learned, and many shall praise his wisdom, and it shall never be forgotten. The memory of him shall not depart away." In hardly any of God's saints has this ideal been realized more perfectly than in the Founder of the Society of Jesus. The discipline which he himself had learned, painfully and slowly, St. Ignatius showed forth and embodied permanently in a religious institute, of which the universal Church and many outside the Church have praised the wisdom and which shall never allow "the memory of him to depart away". Never, certainly, shall Ignatius of Loyola be forgotten. For good or for evil, in praise or in blame, with blessings or with curses, in the grateful heart of the one true Church of Christ, or by her enemies with the tribute of their hatred, St. Ignatius is remembered, and shall be remembered.

There are some saints whose traditional character

stands so high that we feel a little disappointed when we come to the actual details of their lives. St. Ignatius is not one of these. His story is full of incident and vicissitude, and there is a charm about his individual personality. The outlines of his career are familiar to most of our readers, and the picturesque details cannot be filled in here.

In 1891 the fourth centenary of his birth was celebrated. As it has been noticed that his conversion took place in 1521, the year in which Luther broke out openly in revolt against the Church; and as the foundation of the Society of Jesus took place in 1534, the year of the unlawful divorce of Catherine, the virtuous wife of the wicked Henry, from which the Protestant religion in England partly took its rise: so, too, at the outset the significant coincidence has been remarked that Ignatius was born in the year that saw Columbus sail forth to the discovery of a new world, of which the sons of St. Ignatius were to be among the chief evangelizers.

The early life of Don Inigo Loyola was spent at the Court and in the camp. Even in the Court of King Ferdinand he had enough of religion and piety to write a long poem in praise of St. Peter; and he had enough of manliness and knightly valour not to grieve but to rejoice when a war which broke out with France tore him away from the idle frivolities of Court life and turned him into a soldier in earnest. By his personal courage he forced the garrison of Pampeluna to hold out against the besieging force, till a canon ball shattered his right leg. Seeing their leader fall, the Spanish soldiers lost all hope,

and surrendered the fortress, on Whit Monday, 20 May, 1521.

While recovering slowly from his wounds in his ancestral castle of Loyola, which was not far distant, and to which the French commander had, with chivalrous humanity, conveyed his prisoner, he had time to think of many things which had hitherto received scant attention. We do not know how God had spoken to his heart as he lay captive on his couch of pain and weariness during the long hours of the day, and the longer hours of the night; but we know that to beguile the tedium of convalescence Ignatius asked for some of those romances of knight-errantry in which his chivalrous soul delighted. Fortunately, none of these were forthcoming, and for want of something better the patient was fain to turn listlessly over the pages of a volume of "Lives of the Saints" that was brought to him.

This was the crisis in his story. If he had flung the book contemptuously aside, God might have taken no other means of besieging the fortress of his heart. But he did *not* fling it aside. There was something in this ardent soul akin to the saints whose prowess in a different sort of warfare was here recounted. He was no saint yet, but he had many of those natural qualities, which God, the Author of Nature as well as the Author of Grace, often makes use of in the making of a saint. In his worst days he was no dissolute hidalgo, as I have seen him styled somewhere by a profane pen. It was a good sign that he had always been noted for abstaining from gambling, which was at that time the national vice of his

country. If he had not kept himself free from that vicious habit, he would probably have tried to relieve his lassitude by some device very different from the reading of Saints' Lives. Gradually he yielded to the holy spell, the influence of these martyrs and confessors and holy virgins. Here was true courage, true chivalry, true heroism! And soon the cry arose in his soul, as long ago in the kindred soul of St. Augustine: *Numquid ego non potero quod isti et istæ?* "Cannot I do what these have done, mere youths and maidens?"

Thus, then, it came to pass that the gallant Knight Don Inigo was again wounded sore—wounded by the arrow of God's love, which pierced his noble heart. In the rapture of this new agony he could not wait to have his bodily strength restored, but, stealing from his sick couch, he tore himself away for ever, from home and friends and all. He kept his "vigil of arms" one whole night in the chapel of Our Lady of Montserrat, and in the early morning, hanging up his sword at her shrine, he exchanged his officer's uniform for a beggar's rags, and so went forth, the pilgrim of divine love, the willing and happy captive of God's overpowering grace.

Happy? Yes, happy even in his first year of solitary prayer and fasting and penitential cruelties in that dark cave in the rocks which overhang the little river Cardenero as it winds past the town of Manresa. To this period belong the wonderful "Spiritual Exercises" of St. Ignatius, with their precision, their sobriety, their profound wisdom, their absence of exaggeration, which have so deeply

affected the holiest hours of so many holy lives every day since then. Father Faber—not the first Jesuit priest, Blessed Peter Faber, but the brilliant Oratorian who wrote the book, “All for Jesus,” and the hymn:—

Mother of mercy! day by day

My love of thee grows more and more.—

Father Faber says that St. Ignatius, setting out boldly from Paris in search of spiritual adventures, seems tame to him compared with St. Ignatius preparing the points of his meditation years after he had received an infused gift of prayer. And we, too, may be less affected by what greets our eyes when we draw back the brambles that close up the entrance to the bare cave of Manresa, and see the saint rapt in contemplation, pale and emaciated, bathed in his own blood—less impressed by this than when we see him learning grammar with children in the public schools of Barcelona. There is no point in the career of St. Ignatius more instructive than the patient slowness of his preparation for the mighty task that was now assigned to him. He was 30 years of age when his worldly career came to an end at the siege of Pampeluna. Thirty—the best years of his life gone already. What a pity that God’s grace had not vanquished him ten years earlier! *Then* he might have been able to do some great work for God. But *now* all he can hope to do is to sanctify his own soul, and at most to help others by prayer and good example. If he is not content to be a lay brother in some religious Order, but aspires to the priesthood, though so late, his Bishop will, no doubt, exact little study from so pious and edifying a noble-

man, letting his fervour and his self-sacrifice count as preparation, instead of laboriously acquired theological knowledge.

But no. Strange as it seems, this high-born but as yet only half-educated soldier, who at 30 does not know the rudiments of Latin, skilled only in courtly manners and feats of arms, was chosen by God to be the founder of an Order which was to devote itself to the salvation of souls, chiefly through the intellect—through all the other ministries also of the apostolic life, but in a special manner through literature, science, and the education of the young. To qualify him for choosing and influencing and guiding those through whom he will begin this arduous work, Ignatius must himself be trained in the learning of the schools. Though some one has pretended to refute the apophthegm, “who rules o’er freemen must himself be free” by the mocking travesty, “who drives fat oxen must himself be fat,” it remains true, nevertheless, that there must be a certain personal fitness in the instrument chosen for the accomplishment of any special work. The greatest of heathen philosophers, Aristotle—the Aquinas of paganism—had said this long ago, that Nature (that is, God) accommodates the instruments to the work, not the work to the instruments. Hence the long and severe ordeal of preparation through which St. Ignatius went with undaunted courage during so many years; for, as we have said, he was 30 years of age at the epoch of his conversion, and yet he was 43 before he took out his degree of philosophy at Paris in 1534. That was the birth year of the

Society of Jesus. Its birthday was the Feast of the Assumption, when the seven first Jesuits¹ made their vows during the Mass offered up by the only priest of the little band, Blessed Peter Favre, in the Church of Our Lady at Montmartre near Paris. Ignatius himself did not say his first Mass till Christmas Day, 1538, when he was 47 years of age, so slow and patient was his preparation for the work before him. The foundations must be dug deep and broad if they are to sustain a vast and lofty edifice.

An enemy has said that "there is no religious achievement comparable in brilliancy and in the glory of this world to that of having founded the Company of Jesus,"² and a friend has said that "the history of the Jesuits is an epic theme".³ That theme can only be referred to now for the purpose of claiming the whole for St. Ignatius. The work was all his own—the rules and constitutions of the Society of Jesus were the work, not of Lainez or of St. Francis Borgia or of Claudius Aquaviva or any other Father-General or General Congregation, but of St. Ignatius himself—Founder, Father Superior, and First Ruler of the *Minima Societas Jesu*. In his work there is nothing obsolete. His wide-reaching gaze went over all the phases of modern society and made provision for its

¹ Those not named above were Francis Xavier, James Lainez, Simon Rodriguez, Nicholas Bobadilla, and Alphonsus Salmeron. Before the Society had really begun its work, Claude Le Jay, Paschasius Brouet, and John Codure had joined; and so we speak of the ten first Jesuits.

² The "Saturday Review" in its notice of Stewart Rose's "St. Ignatius and the Early Jesuits".

³ Dr. Patrick Murray of Maynooth in the first volume of "The Irish Annual Miscellany," afterwards called "Essays Chiefly Theological".

exigencies. A prejudiced English journalist (and for obvious reasons I am citing witnesses more dispassionate than I, thank God, can pretend to be)—this hostile writer remarks that “we can measure what one man’s power can be when we reflect how the electric energy of Loyola’s mind has perpetuated so long the spirit of this intense and stubborn! loyalty in that army of soldiers of the Church who swear to love her, succour her, obey her, die for her, and who spread their battalions over the world to be her forlorn hope in every breach of heresy”.¹

Nay, rather we find in St. Ignatius an exemplification of one of his own simple but profound sayings, “There are very few who can imagine what God would make of them if they gave themselves to Him without reserve”. *He* gave himself to God without reserve. He joined the deepest humility and self-distrust with the most boundless confidence in God and with the most ardent desire and the most sublime and daring ambition to do great things, and yet greater things, for the greater glory of God. He himself did what he counselled others to do—pray as if everything were to be done by God directly, and then work as if everything depended on your own exertions. In a word, he united the patience and industry of common sense with the enthusiasm, the inspiration of genius; and he was thus an embodiment of that saying of Pascal, the brilliant slanderer of his sons: “Greatness is not shown by those who go to one extreme but by those who touch both extremes and fill the space between them”.

¹ The “Daily Telegraph”.

When Sir Humphry Davy was praised for his important discoveries, he said, "My best discovery was Michael Faraday"; and if any one could have dared to praise St. Ignatius for his works of zeal, he might have said that the greatest of them was Francis Xavier—Xavier whom one outside the Church, Sir James Stephen, calls "the magnanimous, the holy, and the gay; the canonized saint not of Rome only but of universal Christendom". And so when I once attempted to enumerate, in a somewhat unsuitable metre,—brisk amphibrachs instead of grave iambics—a few of the great souls who revered Ignatius as their father, the name of St. Francis Xavier came first:—

When earth's war is done,
 Ignatius, what captive hosts *you* shall have won!
 Great Xavier's magnificent soul your first spoil,
 And so all the marvellous fruits of his toil,
 And all who your flag to the end shall uphold—
 Canisius, Alphonsus, the lay brother old;
 The three youthful saints to the youthful so dear;
 De Britto and Suarez, unlike in their sphere;
 Francis Regis at home drawing thousands to God,
 And Claver, apostle of negroes abroad;
 De Lugo and Bellarmine, who teachers teach,
 With Segneri, Bourdaloue, mighty in speech;
 And Southwell, true poet, true martyr; St. Jure,
 Rodriguez, ascetics large-minded and sure;
 With all who your wise, gentle spirit and rule
 Have followed in pulpit, confessional, school;
 And all who have striven to sanctify men
 By prayer and example, the voice and the pen;
 And all who have laboured and labour unknown
 And thus shall toil on till the last trump is blown:
 In all that each one of your children endures,
 A share shall for ever, Ignatius, be yours.

No one who has read thus far will need to be told that the three young saints crushed into one of these lines were Stanislaus Kostka, Aloysius Gonzaga, and John Berckmans. That three such souls as these were given to it during half a century was surely a very striking proof of God's predilection for the Society founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola.

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After the death of Father John Conmee, S.J., in May, 1910, I was allowed to examine the scanty papers that he left behind him. The only scrap of serious verse that I found was the following, which I insert here as a slight relic of a brilliantly gifted man, a delightful companion, a preacher of engaging eloquence, a scholar of exquisite culture, an edifying religious, and a holy and zealous priest.

'Twas when the long-fought fight was o'er
 Round Pampeluna's leaguered walls,
 A faithful few a warrior bore
 Wounded to his ancestral halls;
 And there through many a livelong day,
 Chafing, the restless chieftain lay.
 Ill could his dauntless spirit brook
 That forced repose. "What, ho!" he cries,
 "Seek me some minnesinger's book
 That tells of feats of high emprise,
 Of knightly deeds in tourney done,
 Of battles lost and kingdoms won."

In vain the hoary seneschal
 Hath sought some tale of old romance;
 More prized within Loyola's hall
 Was good broadsword or trusty lance.
 Ill fared it in those warlike times
 With minstrel's lay or poet's rhymes.

At last (for lack of better cheer)
They bring a volume quaint and old,
Where, writ in language plain and clear,
The legends of God's saints were told.
He read at first with high disdain,
But, reading, read and read again.

He read it when the rising sun
First dawned above the neighbouring hill;
The evening through the oriel shone
And found him poring o'er it still.
His flickering torch's fitful light
Proclaimed him watching through the night.

He read of martyrs undismayed
By rack or gibbet, beast or flame;
The gentle child, the tender maid,
Rejoicing died for Christ's dear Name.
Nor less a marvel he whose life
Was one long penitential strife.

"And, oh!" the enraptured reader cries,
"Henceforth shall these my heroes be;
For they have won a nobler prize
Than highest meed of chivalry,
And they have waged a braver fight
Than e'er was fought by mail-clad knight.

"These will I follow, come what may;
What reck I how I feel or fare?
Am I not mortal, e'en as they?
What men have dared may I not dare?
Courage, my heart! The dauntless soul
Has heaven and earth in its control."

So vowed the Knight, nor vowed in vain.
He found that higher, holier fame.
No son of old, historic Spain
Has shed more lustre on her name;
And far and wide men reverence still
Ignatius' work, Ignatius' will.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, S.J.

(DECEMBER 3.)

[A.D. 1506-1552.]

EXIIT vincens ut vinceret. "He went forth, conquering, that he might conquer." This mystical phrase, from the beginning of the sixth chapter of the Apocalypse, may be turned away from its proper meaning (which is not easy to determine) to mark out for us the two chief stages in the career of the glorious saint whose name brightens this page. He went forth, Francis Xavier, "conquering that he might conquer"—first conquering himself, that so he might conquer many tribes and nations, and make them subject to the Kingdom of Christ. He went forth from his own fair land of Spain, from his ancestral castle under the shadow of the Southern Pyrenees, at first indeed with the hope of returning with riches and honours, won, not on the battlefield, not in the martial profession which his brothers had embraced, but in the nobler field of intellectual strife. Soon, however, a far higher ambition seized upon him. Soon Jesus looked upon this young man and loved him, and when He whispered "Follow Me!" he did not turn away sad like the young man in the gospel. When God said to Francis, as He said of old to

Abraham—"Go forth out of thy country and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and magnify thy name"—then, like the holy patriarch, Francis Xavier obeyed the summons, "and went forth". He went forth from home and friends and kindred and youthful hopes and worldly ambitions, from all the ties that were and the ties that might have been. Not from home only, or from his country he went forth, but from the old continent of Europe, which was then, much more exclusively than now, the seat of civilization and of Christianity—away from the known civilized world to the nations "that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death," to be almost the first and by far the greatest of the missionaries to the heathen East, the new apostle of the Gentiles, the noblest and worthiest successor of St. Paul. *Exiit vincens ut vinceret.* "He went forth conquering that he might conquer."

We are all familiar with the general outlines of that marvellous story of St. Francis Xavier's life. Especially we are likely to remember the crisis, the turning point in his career. In his eager pursuit of knowledge, as we said a moment ago, he went forth from his father's house and his native land, and came to study in the most famous university of the time, at Paris. From being a pupil he soon became a teacher; and in the twenty-second year of his age he was now one of the most brilliant professors of the University, when there came to Paris a countryman of his own, who, though older, was far behind

him in learning, still a mere beginner. But he was no beginner in the science of sanctity. Ignatius Loyola came with a message for that proud but generous heart—a message from the Heart of Jesus. And the word that Jesus put on the lips of Ignatius was the word which the heart of Jesus Himself had inspired, which the lips of Jesus Himself had uttered in the days of His mortal life—that word which should run in solemn undertone through all the life of a Christian—that word which, if we could but take it in its full significance home to our hearts, would be a safeguard against all temptations, a solace in all griefs and trials, a spur and incentive in all weariness and sloth: “What will it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, but lose his soul?” (Matt. xvi. 26; Mark viii. 36).

This peremptory question has often passed, as it is passing now, from heart to heart, but not often from a heart like Ignatius Loyola’s to a heart like Xavier’s. Yet even there there was a stubborn struggle; for had he not first to conquer himself that he might conquer? But the founder of the Society of Jesus, of which Francis was to be a chief pillar, he and Ignatius having respectively in their contrasts of character and position some resemblance to St. Paul and St. Peter among the Apostles—St. Ignatius was not easily repulsed, but went on repeating when a fit occasion offered, “What will it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, but lose his soul?”

The prayers of St. Ignatius and his first companion, Blessed Peter Faber, whose pious heart had offered no such resistance to his invitation—these holy

prayers, and the half-reluctant prayers of young Xavier himself obtained for him at last the grace to give that momentous question the answer which he now rejoices to have given to it—the grace to look on the temporal and the eternal things almost in the same light as he now looks upon them from the bosom of God. He began to see that God had deigned to claim him all for Himself, even on earth—had deigned not only to summon him to His standard, but to make him a leader in the army of the Cross.

And so “he went forth conquering that he might conquer”. First of all, and last of all, and all through, conquering himself. Ah, hardest of all his conquests, costing more than the conversion of India or Japan! And a far more tedious work also. He was half-way through his forty-six years of life when God sent Ignatius to be his guide in the pursuit of perfection; and of his remaining years the smaller portion only was to be devoted to the mighty enterprise with which his human fame is linked.

God prepares His instruments slowly, patiently; but the fit instrument of God duly prepared “fulfils in a short space a long time”.

Jesus Himself—look at Him! He has come to redeem a lost world; He is to return to His eternal Father after thirty-three brief years of exile. Yet at 30, within three years of the end, He hardly seems to have begun His work. All that hidden life, however, has its part in our redemption; and all who wish to do real work for Jesus and for the souls for which Jesus died must live over again His hidden life.

Of St. Francis Xavier's hidden life we can catch but glimpses. We see him spending whole months in continuous meditations and austerities, in which he is so absorbed as sometimes to pass four days without any nourishment. We see him in the hospitals conquering his loathing for the most loathsome of diseases by an act so courageous that God frees him from all difficulty of the sort ever after. Father Simon Rodriguez, another of the seven first Jesuits, overheard him once, when in a vision his future toils and sufferings were foreshown to him, crying out eagerly: "Amplius, Domine, amplius"—"Yet more, O Lord, yet more!"—whereas, on the contrary, when his soul was inundated with spiritual delights, he called on God to stay his hand—"Satis, Domine, satis"—"Enough, O Lord!—it is enough".

But now the time is come for Xavier, having conquered himself, to go forth and conquer. The time is come for him to take his part in that glorious crusade against Heresy and Heathenism for which the Society of Jesus was providentially raised up, its first consecration by vow taking place at Montmartre in Paris on the Feast of the Assumption in 1534, the year of the pretended divorce of the holy Queen Catherine of Aragon, from which dates the English Reformation, sarcastically so called. And then the tide of battle turned. Lord Macaulay had a most uncatholic spirit, yet in the most famous passage of modern English prose he tells us that the cause with which he sympathizes has lost instead of gaining ground since fifty years after Luther's first revolt, while the Catholic Church, after its struggles and

conflicts through all the changing centuries, is still full of youthful life and vigour, the number of her children greater than in any former age, and her acquisitions in the New World more than compensating for what she has lost in the Old.

That compensation she owed to St. Francis Xavier in a larger measure than to any other individual soldier in her glorious army of missionaries. For now that he is ready to go forth, where is the field wide enough for a zeal like his? Europe is too narrow for him. Like another Alexander, he sighs for new worlds to conquer to the Cross. An English statesman in whom Ireland claims a share—George Canning—gave offence to his colleagues by his too self-sufficient boast: "I called a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old". An eloquent phrase, but meaning nothing more than that, when Spain in Europe was distracted and enfeebled, he helped to give stability to the Spanish States in South America by recognizing their independence, and sending to them representatives of the British Government. Our saint could have used the words in a nobler sense, and with greater truth, if his humility had allowed him. He could truly have said: "I called a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old".

He started for the new world, or at least the unknown world of the East, precisely on his thirty-fifth birthday, 7 April, 1541.¹ Only eleven years remained of his life. We cannot give even the merest outline of the wonderful labours which filled those years. The toils and dangers and hardships which he endured

are simply inconceivable to us now in the present state of commerce and civilization with all the helps and comforts for travellers that have since been invented, many of them only in our own day. The journeys that he made would, it is calculated, have taken him three times over the whole surface of the globe. No wonder that God accredited His great ambassador with the most splendid gift of miracles.

The practical lesson which I shall try now to enforce by the example of St. Francis is drawn from none of the broader or more prominent features of his character. It is indeed highly instructive to observe the saint's fidelity to prayer in the midst of such harassing and distracting labours, not merely finding time, for instance, for the daily recitation of the Breviary, but exciting his fervour by saying the hymn of the Holy Ghost before each of the divisions of the Divine office. But it is to a more minute point in the spiritual life that St. Francis Xavier's example may at present serve to call our attention. Not to prayer in general, but to ejaculatory prayer—the habit of sending up to heaven brief aspirations when we are not on our knees, formally engaged in prayer, but in going about from one of our daily duties to another. This was St. Francis Xavier's habit, and we see it in the account given of his death. Happy they who, when in their ordinary health, train their hearts and their lips to utter holy words and phrases which will spring spontaneously to their lips when the hand of death is upon them. To such as these, even in the pain and languor of the last sickness, holy aspirations and prayers will occur naturally, to the great comfort

and strength of the dying ones, and to the great comfort and edification of those who are helping them to die.

And so it was in that rude hut on the island of San Chan where Xavier lay dying just opposite the coast of China, like Moses dying on Mount Nebo, within sight of the Promised Land. The Chinese lad who attended him heard him constantly making use of ejaculations in Latin, and the ones that he could record for us were those already familiar to him—O Sanctissima Trinitas! “O Most Holy Trinity.” And again—“Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me”. And then the appeal to the Blessed Virgin, *Monstra, te esse Matrem*, “Show thyself a mother”. And, last of all, about two o’clock on Friday, 2 December, 1552, he fixed his eyes lovingly upon his crucifix, his face lighted up with joy, sweet tears poured from his eyes, and he breathed forth his pure soul, repeating the last words of the Te Deum: *In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum*—“In thee, O Lord, I have hoped; let me not be confounded for ever.”

Let us, after the example of St. Francis Xavier, fix holy words like these in our memory, and try to make the use of them habitual with us. But better still it will be for us to fasten for ever in our minds that inspired word which recalls not the end but the beginning of this apostolic career, which Ignatius made use of to turn away from earthly pursuits the magnificent soul of the youthful Xavier: “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world but suffer the loss of his soul?” Years afterwards he

urged King John III of Portugal to make this maxim of Our Saviour the subject of meditation for a quarter of an hour each day; and to his novices at Goa he wrote: Keep always present before your minds that word of the God-man: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his soul?"

To gain the whole world! Who does that? No one. Yet even if we could, it would be madness to purchase it with the loss of our souls. What folly then is theirs who for some contemptible crumb of the world risk their immortal souls! Nay, what would it profit a man to gain the whole world even in that noblest sense in which St. Francis Xavier gained it by gaining it for God, if, after having preached to others, he should himself become a cast-away?

All, however, are not called to imitate this saint in his zeal for the salvation of outcast souls. But each of us has at least one soul committed to his trust—one soul whose eternal destiny rests in his hands—that soul of which Our Lord's question is so emphatically asked: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world if he lose his soul?"

ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA.

(NOVEMBER 13.)

[A.D. 1550-1568.]

THERE are some saints whose traditional attractions and influence seem hardly to be justified by the actual details of their life and character when we come to study their history. St. Stanislaus Kostka is, I think, one of these. The facts of his short life are few and simple. I will venture to give them again in the form in which they presented themselves to me a great many years ago, when I had already, however, passed the utmost limit of our young saint's life :—

Yes, let me dare the love to say
That's throbbing for thee in this heart,
For dearer and more dear each day,
Sweet little Stanislaus, thou art.

So amiable art thou and mild,
Guileless and gay and kind to all,
The youngest and the fairest child
Of him whom I too Father call.

Brother ! But that name points to thee
Tortured for years without complaint.
Ah ! how had Paul the heart to be
So cruel towards his little saint ?

Of princely birth, of graceful form,
With winning manners, talents rare,
High-swalling hopes, affections warm—
What from the world thy soul can tear ?

To thy sick-couch doth Mary bring
The healing grace—then lends to thee
To fondle in thy arms the King
Whose knight she bids thee live to be.

Twice, too, that loving Lord, unknown,
E'en in His Eucharistic guise,
Nor borne by priestly hand, has flown,
To hush thy pining amorous sighs.

And, years before, His name o'er thee
Gleamed on the Polish mother's breast—
For God would mark thee His, as we
Some favourite book with name and crest.

And so, brave boy ! on fire with love
For Him who claimed thee thus ere birth,
Since thou not yet may'st flee above,
Thou seek'st His Brotherhood on earth ;

And after weary toils and care,
At sainted Borgia's feet thou prayest
To be of those who meekly bear
The Name of names—and there thou stayest.

Thus, Kostka, oped thine eighteenth year ;
A novice then nine months at Rome,
Dear to all hearts—to God, so dear
He bade thy mother call thee home.

At dawn of her own parting-day,
As thou hadst prayed and prophesied,
Thy happy spirit broke away,
Dying of love as she had died.

Oh, sweetest, loveliest saint in heaven !
Forgive love's tone, too free and wild.
To children childish names are given,
And thou art such—God's darling child.

Angel of God! We sometimes dare
To call thee so—and well we may,
For angels could not be more fair,
And thou art pure and bright as they.

Angel in death, in life, in birth—
Angel in form, in heart, in tongue—
Oh! God be blessed for blessing earth
With saint so gentle, fair and young!

Why has a saint who did so little so great a fascination, greater even than the other young saint whose life just overlaps that of Stanislaus? For Aloysius, you will remember, was an infant six months old when Stanislaus ended those eighteen fruitful years that had begun exactly half way through the fatal sixteenth century—1550.

The first excuse we offer for our partiality is—he was so young! *Consummatus in brevi!* He was like some exquisite miniature painted with all the patient enthusiasm of genius and surpassing a thousand-fold in worth huge canvases covered by the brush of an ordinary artist. That was what Father Roothaan meant by calling St. Stanislaus “le bijou de la Compagnie” in a domestic conference, as one of his listeners reported to me long afterwards.

We know to whose custody this gem was entrusted. And beyond all doubt God showed a wonderful predilection for the young Society that St. Ignatius had founded only a very few years before, in giving to her at the very outset such saints as Xavier and Stanislaus—nay, in letting her first century be sanctified by that triad of youthful saints, Stanislaus, Aloysius, and Berchmans.

Out of these three very many feel drawn by quite

a special attraction towards the first and youngest of them. He seems to them somehow to be more ethereal, more seraphic, than even his Italian or his Belgian brother. We indeed began these remarks by making Stanislaus an illustration of the fact that the traditional and, as it were, instinctive idea entertained by the faithful with regard to certain saints is sometimes not borne out by the authentic incidents of their lives : and in such cases we are safe in trusting to dim tradition rather than to dry history. But in the brief idyllic story of the Polish Prince there is much for the pious imagination to rest upon with pleasure.

His princely birth made his sacrifice immensely greater, especially in those days, though such distinctions may seem childish and trivial in these prosaic times, and especially to those who must live habitually, almost in spite of themselves, in the atmosphere of Bethlehem and Nazareth. How high Stanislaus ranked among the nobility of Poland may be gathered from the fact that, when the Duke of Anjou resigned the crown of Casimir and Sigismund, in order to succeed his brother, Henry III of France, the Kostka family were among the foremost claimants of the vacant throne.

If not his princely birth, has his Polish blood any share in securing for St. Stanislaus our affectionate predilection? There is a certain fellow-feeling between Poland and the beautiful western island that Montalembert called "*La Pologne de la Mer*". I dare say Irish schoolboys are still fond of declaiming that very declamatory poem which tells how Freedom

shrieked when Kosciusko fell. A friend of mine lived lately for a considerable time in Poland, and her accounts of the simple and fervent faith and piety of the Polish peasantry, the austerity of their lives, and especially the rigour of their fasting, and then the persistence of the Russian tyranny that grinds them down, would remind one of Ireland of the penal days. But, whether or not there be any similarity between the national character of the two races, there is a certain degree of fellow-feeling and sympathy between Ireland and Poland, and this may be among the reasons why we are drawn to St. Stanislaus as a Pole with a more tender affection than if he belonged to some over-mastering nation like France or Germany.

Another distinctive peculiarity of St. Stanislaus is that he belongs to what we might call the Bambino group of saints—that is, saints who are usually represented with the Divine Infant in their arms. I can recall only St. Joseph himself, St. Anthony of Padua, and our own St. Stanislaus; for the child that St. Vincent de Paul carries in his arms is only a human child that he took up to soften the hearts of the Ladies of Charity whom some special difficulties were tempting to abandon their holy work. But the Child that St. Stanislaus folds to his breast is not human but Divine, for we know the marvellous boon conferred by the Blessed Virgin on St. Stanislaus in sharing with him in some mysterious way the sweet privilege enjoyed once by the aged Simeon and often by St. Joseph.

However, in every meditation on the attractions

of St. Stanislaus Kostka, we are sure to fall back on the claim that we began with—he died so young. “Whom God loves dies young.”¹ The Reaper of the Flowers, or rather (as that is a name for Death), the Master of the Garden, does not wait always for the full-blown flower; the half-opened blossom is some times sweeter and more exquisite.

If by any device or knowledge
 The rosebud its beauty could know,
 It would stay a rosebud for ever
 Nor into its fullness grow.
 And, if thou couldst know thy own sweetness,
 O little one, perfect and sweet,
 Thou wouldst be a child for ever,
 Completer whilst incomplete.²

Young saints are the rosebuds of God's garden, and they remain rosebuds for ever. Their lives, seemingly unfinished, illustrate the Greek proverb, which Hesiod quotes, *Κρείσσον ἥμισυ πάντος*—“The half is better than the whole”.

In this sense, daring to bestow upon our young saint a title that has at least the merit of originality, I will call Stanislaus the Keats of hagiology. The fascination which the young poet who was not “snuffed out by an article,” as Byron said of him, and whose name was not “writ in water,” as he said of himself—the fascination which John Keats still exercises, especially over youthful poetical minds,

¹ Menander uses the pagan plural: “Ὅν οἱ θεοὶ φιλοῦσιν ἀποθνήσκει νέος. And so does Plautus (“Bacchides,” Act iv. scene 7): *Quem Di diligunt adolescens moritur*. Shakespeare, “Richard III,” Act iii. scene 1: “So wise, so young, they say, do ne’er live long”.

² Sir Francis Turner Palgrave.

would probably have been diminished rather than increased if he had lasted as long as the late Laureate ; who, however, is himself against me on this point, for Tennyson is reported as saying : " If Keats had lived, he would have been King of us all ". I doubt it. I suspect that, on the contrary, his fame would have suffered, the spell would have been broken, and at any rate his name would not have been lit up, as it is now, with the vague glamour of all that might have been.

Let me add an example of the same sort on a smaller scale nearer home. Nearly fifty years ago a small book was published in Dublin—"Versicles," by Thomas Irwin. There were really exquisite things in it, and all the pieces were perfectly finished and mature (the poet was 30 years old already and well educated). If he had printed nothing more, but had been so judicious as to die soon after, it would have been very easy to write a striking essay on the wonderful promise and performance of that one little book. But unfortunately he lived on till the last decade of the century and wrote several volumes of prose and verse, with touches of genius through them all, "but genius to madness near allied"—and indeed poor Irwin's mind more than once gave way. He did not fulfil the promise, or even maintain the perfection, of his earlier little book of "Versicles".

In another department, yet not quite different, Thomas Davis owes partly to his early death his unique position in the story of Ireland through the middle of the nineteenth century. He died at the moment that was best for his fame. How would he

have fared in history if he had survived to accompany or not accompany Smith O'Brien to Ballingarry?

I hope these somewhat incongruous parallels will be forgiven, if they help ever so little to emphasize St. Stanislaus' good fortune in being made perfect in a short space and thus fulfilling a long time.

This cannot now (for some of us especially) be our particular way of attaining perfection. In the beautiful collect of St. Stanislaus—which, however, is almost a plagiarism from the “Commune Virginum” and does not at all rival the concentrated energy and exquisite symmetry of the three prayers in the Mass of St. Aloysius—in this prayer we reckon among the miracles of God's wisdom the union which His grace has effected in saints like Stanislaus, between tender age and mature sanctity. With us it will be His mercy chiefly that must be triumphant in securing at last in more than mature age some approach to the holiness that befits our state. *Tempus instanter operando redimentes, in aeternam ingredi requiem festinemus*—“Redeeming our time, making up for lost time by labouring earnestly, let us make haste to enter into everlasting rest”. Some of us have not made much haste hitherto. We have been a good while on the road. Ours has been at best the punning motto of the Onslow family, *Festina lente*—“Hasten slowly; on, slow!” We have hastened slowly, and we have emphasized the adverb: the slowness of our haste has been the more apparent of the two. The thought of St. Stanislaus, his example and his prayers, must shame us and nerve us into greater earnestness, more thoroughness, more generosity in corresponding

with the grace of God and striving after the degree of perfection that God has a right to expect from us.

In his meditation for the Feast of St. Stanislaus, Father Avancinus says: *Tria celebrantur hujus sancti adolescentis apophthegmata*—"Three weighty sayings of this holy youth, this boy saint, have become famous". The first of these is, *Non ad caduca sed ad aeterna natus sum*—"I was born, not for perishable things, but for the things eternal". Happy the man who can truthfully adopt in this higher sense the noble boast of the painter Zeuxis, when some one complained of the slowness of his work: *Pingo aeternitati*—"I paint for eternity". Not for a few fleeting months, but for the Eternal Years do I live and labour. The second of St. Stanislaus' apophthegms was, *Melius est cum obedientia parva facere quam per propriam voluntatem magna praestare*—"It is better to do little things through obedience than to do great things through one's own will". The third was, *Mater Dei est mater mea*—"The Mother of God is my mother".

Here they are again in couplets, slightly diluted:—

Not for the fleeting things that wise men scorn,
But for the things eternal was I born.

Better the little things obedience asks
Than greater things, our self-will's harder tasks.

God's Mother is my mother, too, my own—
Have I to her all filial duty shown?

These three watchwords: "I am made, not for time but for eternity"; "Better the little things of obedience than the great things of self-will"; "The

Mother of God is my mother"—these might well be made the three points of a fruitful meditation, and it ought not to be hard to end with an affectionate colloquy to St. Stanislaus before the usual colloquies to Our Blessed Lady, to Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to God Our Father who is in heaven.

ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA.

(JUNE 21.)

[A.D. 1568-1591.]

“THE young man went away sad, for he had very great possessions” (Matt. XIX. 22). A strange text for the feast of a Saint who just did the opposite; who, instead of going away sad, came with eager joy and left all things gladly to follow Jesus. Yet it is for this very reason that I ask you in honour of St. Aloysius to fix your thoughts first for a few moments on one who refused to be a Saint, who shrank back like a coward where Aloysius rushed forward like a hero, and who thus (with some striking resemblances) affords nevertheless that contrast which is needed to set off the wiser and braver conduct of our Saint. Aloysius is all purity, serenity, dazzling whiteness, without any of those darker shades that relieve the eyes unused to such unearthly splendours. Even young hearts like yours may feel themselves more closely akin to that other youth who went away sad.

Think of him! He came with breathless haste, he too a prince like Aloysius, *quidam princeps* St. Luke calls him—at least a man of wealth and position. This young Hebrew ruler came eagerly one day and flung himself at the feet of Jesus. For he had heard

much of this great Prophet who was going about doing good to all, and speaking as never man had spoken before. "Master, what shall I do that I may have life everlasting?" The one supreme question which rises up in every sincere and thoughtful heart, making itself at times more loudly heard and more anxiously and more imperiously demanding an answer. Such an inquirer, thoughtful and sincere, this youth seems to have been, since, when our Lord replied first: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," he was able to urge his inquiry further, saying, "What is there wanting to me still? All those I have kept from my youth."

Nor was this a lying boast, for He who reads the heart looked on him and loved him, and as the highest and most solemn token of His love, said to him: "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow Me".

Was not this the same sublime summons which was given to the Twelve who were to be the pillars of the great Christian Church? Perhaps this nameless youth might have been one of them. If he had followed Jesus as they did, his name, now unknown, would be glorious to-day. He might perhaps have been dearer to His Divine Master than St. John, higher than St. Peter, a greater teacher than St. Paul. We know not what designs of God his cowardice may have thwarted. But we do know that our Lord's promise would have been kept, and he would now "have treasure in Heaven".

Ah, he chose for himself a very different fate. He

had not courage enough, a mind grand and noble enough, a heart sufficiently generous, to leave all and follow Jesus. No, when he heard that word, "he went away sad, for he had great possessions". Paltry those possessions were in all probability according to our modern notions; and, at the best, the difference between a few hundreds and a few thousands a year is not worth a thought when there is question of God and Heaven and eternity.

And that was the question here, deciding to a great extent, as many single moments of a life decide, the eternal destinies of a soul. How were they decided for this soul? No matter about this passing world; for, however long he may have enjoyed those great possessions, was he not haunted by the thought of the yearning love that had looked upon him out of the eyes of Jesus? And, whether he enjoyed them for a few years or for many years, they came to an end for him in what seems to us already a mere moment compared with all the years since then; and what when compared with the eternal years that are to follow? No matter about this passing world, but in the other world—if grace rejected in this crisis of his life led on, as it may have led on, to the loss of other graces, to sin, to impenitence and eternal death—think of the difference between the two eternities, the eternity of joy and glory this poor youth would have secured if he had followed Jesus when that merciful Saviour said to him "*Come!*" and the eternity of shame and anguish which must now be his for ever if Jesus the just Judge has said to him "*Depart!*"

This melancholy scene, which is meant to serve here

as the background of a brighter picture, is repeated perhaps every day in many young hearts all the world over. The same eager yearning for everlasting life—the same summons to leave all and follow Jesus—alas! too often the same shrinking backward and going away sad, and this generally without even the wretched excuse of those “great possessions”.

Thus it is too often, but, thank God, not always. Not so with that saint in whose honour heaven and earth hold festival to-day. He too “had great possessions”. Aloysius was of princely birth in an age which held princes in higher account than they are held nowadays, though we know how much social distinctions of a far lower degree are still prized amongst men. But at the close of the sixteenth century something of the old feudalism survived in Northern Italy, and a prince of the great ducal house of Mantua, eldest son of the Marquess of Castiglione, was far more than an ordinary mortal. It is now more than 300 years since Aloysius died, and it may help us to realize how long ago that is if we recall to mind that in the year that Aloysius was born there was growing up a little English boy, six years old, called William Shakespeare.

But though I have fixed thus minutely the date of Aloysius's birth, I have no intention of going through the story of his life. Short and simple it is, and in its general outlines familiar to most of us. Our Saint was like one of those exquisite miniatures into which a great artist has compressed the most marvellous efforts of his genius. “Being made perfect in a brief space, he fulfilled a long time.”

God might almost seem to have forestalled all rivals for the possession of this precious soul. But no; to Aloysius also as to that young man who went away sad, the free choice was given. "If thou wilt be perfect." All rests with the will, for on the part of God's grace nothing is wanting. "If thou *wilt* be perfect!" "Peace on earth to men of good will," aye and glory in the highest, for the Most High shares His glory with those who serve Him with a brave and generous will.

Aloysius had no wavering. He said, "I will be perfect," and according as God made His will clear to him, he did it promptly, cheerfully, perfectly. Not only of God's commandments, but of the indications of God's good pleasure, and of the inspirations of His grace, he could say, "All these I have kept from my youth". No wonder that God looked on him and loved him. Before he was half-way through his very brief career, he had already reached a high degree of holiness. When we remember how early many of us are capable of much that is bad, we need marvel the less that so peculiar a trophy of God's grace, so special an object of the divine predilection, should at an early age be capable of much that is very good and holy.

Almost before Aloysius could speak to his pious mother—for amidst all the dangers of his high station he had at least one safeguard and the best; like his royal namesake of France (for Lewis and Aloysius are two forms of the same name) he had a saintly mother—before he could converse with his mother on earth, he could converse by prayer with his Father in Heaven.

Frequent and fervent prayer from the dawn of reason and (after he had received his First Communion from the hands of St. Charles Borromeo) the frequent and pious use of the Sacraments—these channels of grace which are open to all of us, the holy Sacraments and prayer, kept his soul fresh and pure in its dewy fragrance, such that the eye of God could rest upon it always well pleased. There was nothing there to dim or tarnish the sheen of heavenly grace.

The most innocent of you, dear children, could only smile at the little faults, if they *were* faults, which were all that Aloysius had to reproach himself with, and for which he felt greater sorrow than we can feel for our worst sins. In this he was right and we are wrong. He approached nearer to God's judgment of the sinfulness of sin. We hold up our little taper against the objects round us, and it shows to us like a bright flame; *he* held his against the full sun, on which it fell like a shadow. He did not compare himself with others and look down upon others; but he looked up to God, he compared himself with God, and he sank down, sweetly humbled, into his own nothingness. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." His heart was pure, and even through the dark mists of this world, he could see God more clearly, and feel Him more near; and he learned by prayer and meditation to deepen in his pure and thoughtful soul an abiding and overmastering sense of God's sanctity and God's sovereign rights—His right to universal sacrifice, His right to universal homage, His right to universal love.

Testing all that was within him and around him

by this divine standard, he saw that he was indeed of himself "poor and miserable and blind and naked," and that all the treasures and glories of this world are the merest dross and filth. Hence that question which came to be the watchword and war-cry of his life: *Quid hoc ad æternitatem?*—"What is this to eternity?" Let it be our watchword also. What is the bearing of this or that deed or omission, this or that course of action, upon our eternity? What is this joy or that pain compared with the joys and the pains of eternity?

Now although compared with eternity, the difference between a short life and a long life, between twelve summers and seventy winters, fades away to a mere nothing, yet to us in our short-sightedness the difference is great. We cannot judge of things always by what they are, but by what they seem. The near has more influence upon us than the far: as a fly on the window-pane may hide from view a mountain in the distance. We require to remind ourselves again and again of the real perspective, of the true relative proportions of temporal and eternal things.

The feast of to-day is meant to be a help towards this. Every death sudden or lingering, every funeral, the thought of every one who has passed out of life before us, is a reminder that we must follow. But the feast of a young Saint like our Aloysius lays a peculiar emphasis on the utter inequality between the few hours of human life, and the long, long years of eternity. We are mere midges on the earth's surface, insects of an hour. But, if we were giants of centuries, it would be all the same. Let our share

of this world be large or small, we must soon part with it. Alexander, after conquering the world, had to give it all up. Or, to come to our own day, and to a homelier example, a man who died a few months ago, and died (thank God) a good Christian death, said to a friend on his deathbed: "Here am I with twenty thousand pounds in the Funds, and I'm dying".

And here it is well to put a few questions to ourselves. Is there any one here so young and so foolish as to keep these thoughts far away from himself as if he were too young to put in practice conclusions to which the things I am saying point? Surely the one general conclusion comes home to all of us that Life is a poor thing except for what it leads to, that Heaven is worth fighting for, and that only those who fight for it can hope to win it. In our Father's house, indeed, there are many mansions; but into the least glorious of them nothing defiled can enter. We are not called upon to do all that Aloysius did—the constancy and fervour of his prayer, the severity of his penance, the completeness of his sacrifice—but we *are* called upon, all of us, to do enough to qualify ourselves for at least the lowest place in that Heaven in which St. Aloysius is far from the highest. Yet remember that those who aim at just reaching the lowest may just miss their aim. We must have nobler souls than *that* would show.

But, as I was going on to say a moment ago, this work of saving our souls and gaining our proper place in Heaven is not a matter for the last hours or the last years of life, but for all the years and all the

hours of our lives. It is not a work to begin after we are 20 or 40 years old, or to be reserved for some quiet respectable old age far ahead in which we may be fit for nothing else. No, no! It is the one business for all of us at all ages, for every minute of the longest life; and therefore it concerns the youngest among us.

Moreover, who knows what life is to be short, and what life is to be long? Death is not very particular about dates; it does not follow a chronological order. It is more than possible that the oldest of us will not be the first to be called away, and it is more than possible also that the youngest shall not be the last. Some of you, dear children, may not even reach the limit of that brief life to which our thoughts are now turned.

Some thirty years ago,¹ at a political assembly in Belfast, one of the speakers, urging that the hopes of the cause which he advocated lay with the young men of Ireland, with the young rather than with the old, said, "To-morrow is the old man's hope, but the young man's promise". This was meant to be a striking and eloquent sentiment, and of course it was greeted with "loud cheers". But it has the disadvantage of being false. *Who* has promised to-morrow to the youngest and strongest among us? He who alone could keep such a promise has on the contrary warned us over and over again that we know not the day nor the hour. Nay, I may venture to add as a startling exemplification of this uncertainty of life that

¹ In 1847, for these words were spoken in the chapel of Clongowes College, Co. Kildare, 21 June, 1875.

the very speaker of these words some years after, in the prime of life, and with the sure prospect of a long and honourable career before him, in his brilliant Canadian exile, was himself, without a moment's warning, struck down by the hand of an assassin.

Death in a form just as sudden as that and far less hopeful—for Thomas D'Arcy M'Gee was, thank God, a devout, practical Catholic, and had received Holy Communion a day or two before—a more sudden death has cut off many a one who held practically the doctrine of the rash young orator whom I have quoted, that to-morrow is the young man's promise. Youthful clients of Aloysius, let none of you hold that doctrine. On the contrary, begin each day as if God's messenger, Death, was likely to summon you before nightfall; and each night go to sleep with a pure conscience so that it would be well with you, even if it happened to you, as it has happened to many, to sink into the deeper sleep of death, and to wake up in the other world. Yes, there is no doubt at all that the only way to be surely ready when God calls for us is to give heed betimes to His merciful warning, and to be ready always.

These are some of the lessons which the Church wishes us to draw from the example of St. Aloysius. May we, old and young, take these lessons earnestly to heart; and may we, day by day, according to our different graces and different callings, try to secure the place which God has ready for each of us in that heaven where Aloysius is at this moment happy and glorious and praying for us all.

THE THREE YOUNG JESUIT SAINTS.

OF the three young Saints of the Society of Jesus, who form a sort of shamrock of sanctity, two have been already named. We may end now by grouping them all together. We do so in order to emphasize a point which Cardinal Parocchi, Vicar to Pope Leo XIII, has brought out thus :—

“It is, it seems to me, a mark of predestination for religious orders to produce young saints. Such were Louis of Toulouse and John Baptist of Burgundy among the Franciscans, Imelda Lambertini among the Dominican Nuns, Michael de’ Santi among the Trinitarians, Jerome Tiraboschi among the sons of St. Camillus, the Venerable Castelli among the Barnabites, Brother Gabriel of Our Lady of Dolours among the Passionists, and in the Society of Jesus the three sublime heroes, Kostka, Gonzaga, and Berchmans.”

All these, it seems, died young after being made perfect in a short time. The three that the Cardinal reserves for the last, St. Stanislaus, St. Aloysius, and St. John Berchmans, are known to all who are at all familiar with modern saints ; but many, I think, will hear now for the first time all the other names except Blessed Imelda. No doubt their lives abound in touching incidents and are full of fascination if we

were acquainted with the edifying details; but they have not yet become "favourite saints" outside their own religious congregations. Surely Pope Leo's Vicar is right in saying that it was a mark of predestination for the Society of Jesus to be entrusted during the first century of its existence with the guardianship of the three youthful saints that form the climax of his catalogue.

The comparative chronology of these three miniature lives (too big a phrase for so small a matter) is easily fixed in memory. St. Stanislaus, the youngest of them, came first—exactly in the middle of the fatal sixteenth century, 1550. In his eighteenth year he died, 15 August, 1568, when Aloysius was an infant 5 months old. Aloysius died in his twenty-third year, 1592. And then the world had to wait eight years till his place was taken by John Berchmans, who was born in 1599. In spite of this break in the chain the whole interval between the birth of Stanislaus and John's death in 1621 was only seventy-one years in all; and the sum of their united lives is about sixty-four years. But each of them, "being made perfect in a short space, fulfilled a long time"—*explevit tempora multa*, literally, "filled out many times," lived many lives equivalently through the intensity of fervour, the accumulation of merit, and the purity of love.

Three countries far apart, Poland, Italy, and Belgium, gave them birth; but to all the three Rome, the capital of Christendom, the City of the Soul (as Byron calls her), gave the true birth, the beginning of the true life—a holy death.

What other circumstances may be noted here as points of contact or of contrast? One difference between Berchmans and the Novice and the Scholastic¹ that he prayed to and tried to imitate is that he was not, like them, of noble birth. They were princes—in an age when princes were looked up to by the common people as denizens of another world; in an age when to descend from a throne was a more heroic sacrifice than it would be counted nowadays. But their-Belgian brother was the son of an honest shoemaker of Diest; and all his changes of circumstance were ordinary and commonplace. Nothing startling, nothing out of the common, nothing seemingly heroic. His beatification is the consecration of simple, common duties perfectly discharged. A saintly woman whose holiness and humility partly hid her literary gifts which almost reached genius, Lady Georgiana Fullerton, draws the moral of St. John Berchmans' story in these words: "In studying the records of his short life there rises in the mind a keen sense of the beauty of innocence, of the loveliness of early piety, and the wonderful power of grace, which, when corresponded to in youth, raises the soul in a brief time to so high a sanctity. Through these few but full years we watch innocence growing into virtue and virtue becoming sanctity until at last we stand by the couch where in the flower of his age, having been made perfect in a short time, he is about to die, and angels seem to whisper *Consummatus est*."

Not to Berchmans alone but to all of these three

¹ This is the title of a Jesuit between noviceship and priesthood.

young Jesuit saints these words are applicable, and also these other words of the same devout and noble lady: "Pure innocent existences, early consecrated to God, soon summoned to His Presence, their work accomplished, their labour over, leaving behind them sweet memories and bright examples".

There is another beloved name, one of the most brilliant in ascetic literature, which I rejoice to link with St. Aloysius. In Father Bowden's admirable biography of the fascinating Oratorian, Father Faber, we are told that "after praying at the shrine of St. Aloysius on the feast of that Saint (21 June, 1843) he left the church speechless and not knowing where he was going. He said afterwards that he saw then he must within three years either be a Catholic or lose his mind." On the following 30 September he wrote to Dr. Newman from Berne: "I told Dr. Grant, when I was in an extraordinary tumult of mind in the Church of St. Ignatius on the feast of St. Aloysius, that I would not make up my mind till the same day in 1845". To the same Dr. Grant, afterwards first Bishop of Southwark, he said that "on 21 June St. Aloysius had always knocked very hard at his heart".

May he knock very hard at our hearts also, and may he not knock in vain! May Aloysius and Stanislaus and Berchmans, Ignatius and Xavier and Vincent, Monica and Augustine and Patrick and Matthew—may these and all the saints that we love and honour and the myriads of saints that are unknown to us—may all the saints of God, canonized and uncanonized, especially those whom we knew and loved

while they were here, who loved us and who love us: may they all help us by their prayers to live in God's service and to die in God's grace. *Et illi pro nobis intercedere dignentur in coelis quorum memoriam agimus in terris.* So does the priest pray at the altar just before turning round to say to the people, *Orate, fratres.* So do I pray now, especially to those whose names have hallowed these pages. "May they whose memory we cherish on earth deign to intercede for us in heaven"—that so we may end a Christian life by a happy death, that we may be for ever trophies of God's mercy rather than of God's justice, and that our everlasting lot may be **AMONG THE BLESSED.**

COLOPHON.

'Tis many a year since a little child
Was wont to pore o'er the pages
That told the tale of virgins mild,
Of martyrs and sainted sages,
Till he learned to love the saints above
Like sisters and like brothers :
May his little book light up that love
In his heart grown old, and others !

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Russell, M.

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Among the Blessed

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